MARVEL®

FREE GIFT ISSUE!

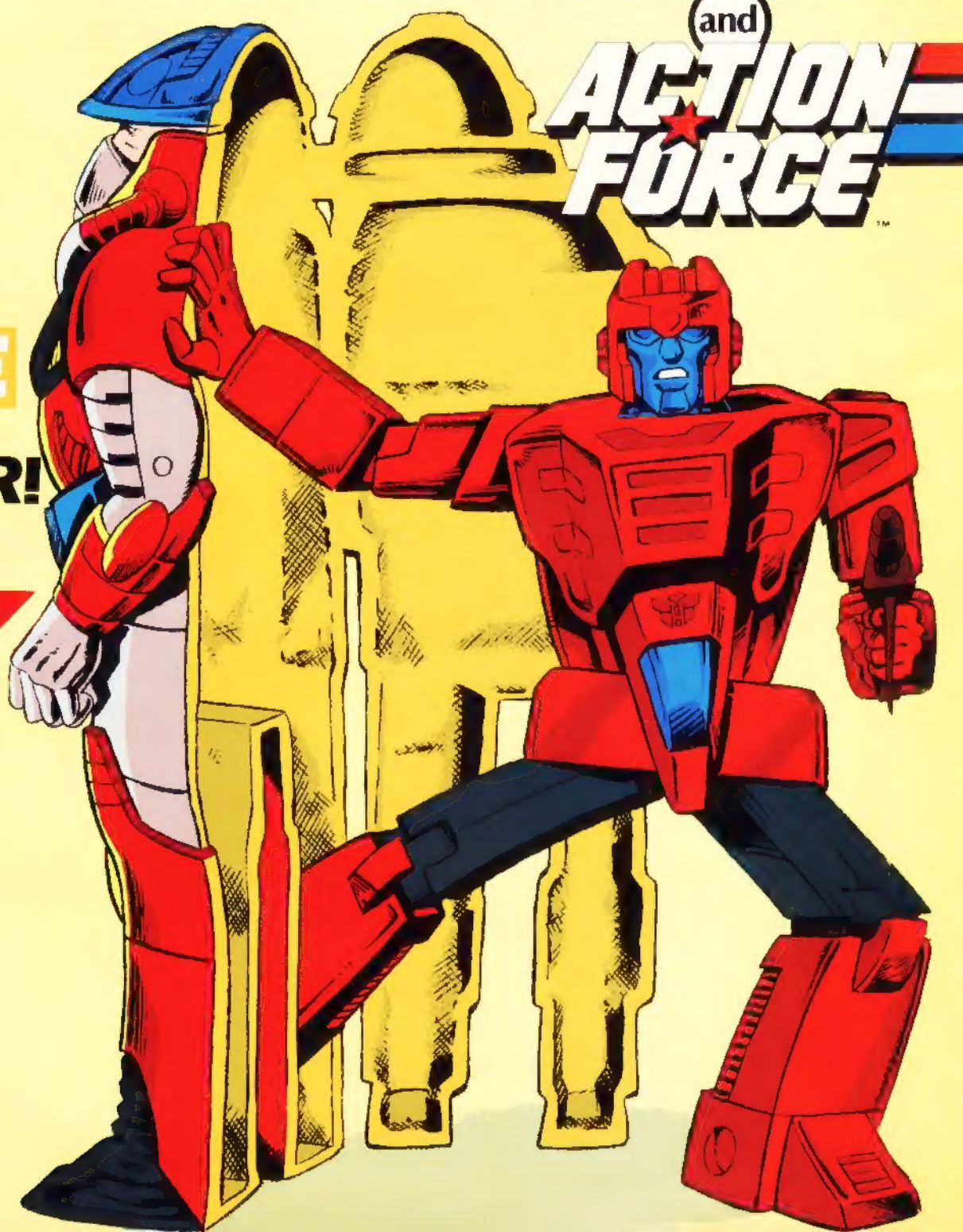
23rd Apr.88
№162 32p
U.S.$1.35 CAN.$1.75

THE TRANSFORMERS™

and

ACTION FORCE™

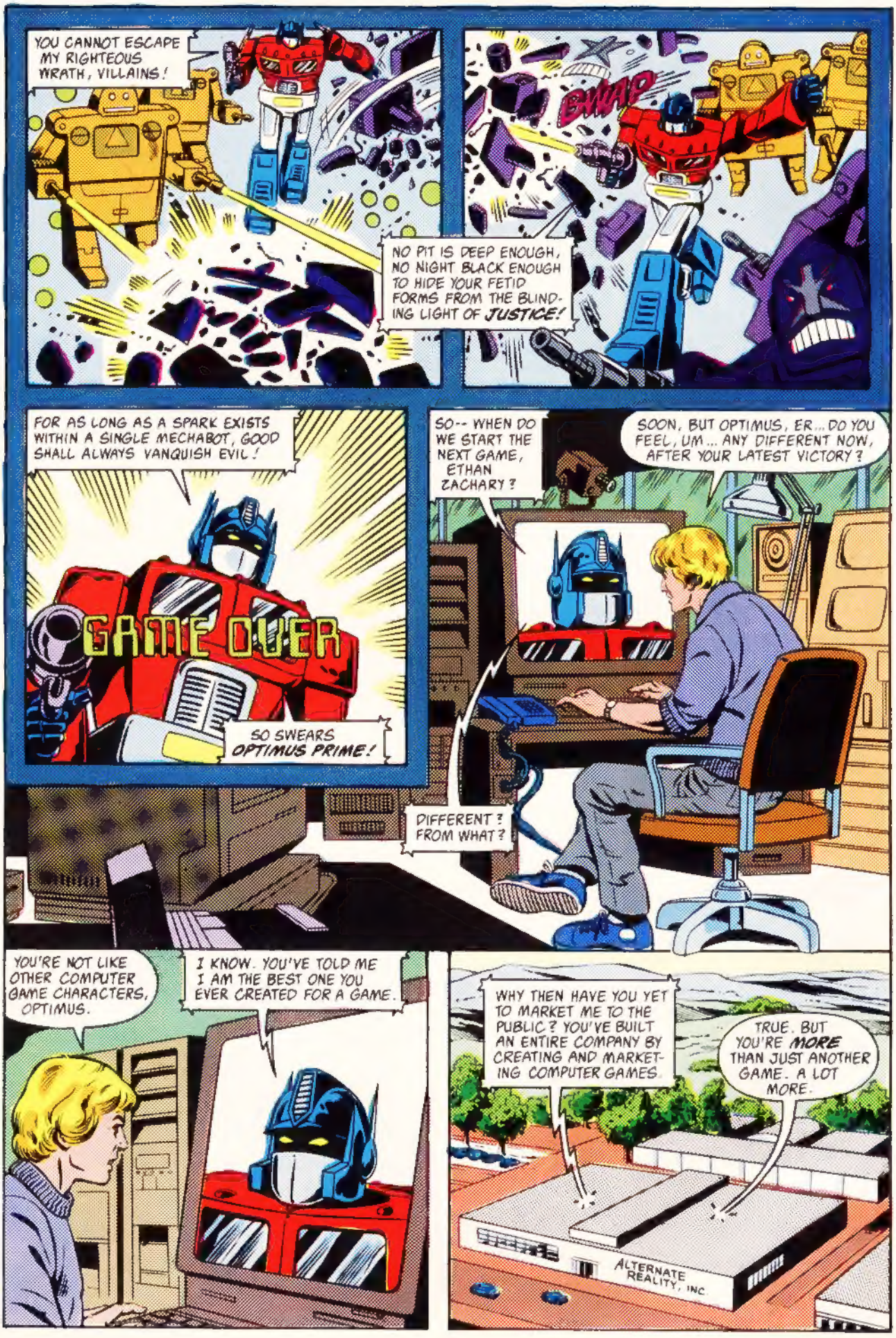
YOUR FREE STICKER!

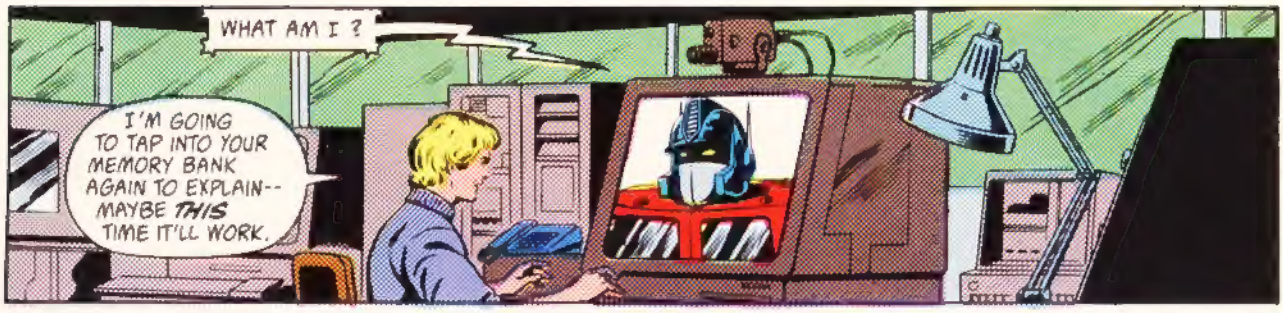


TRANSFORMERS™

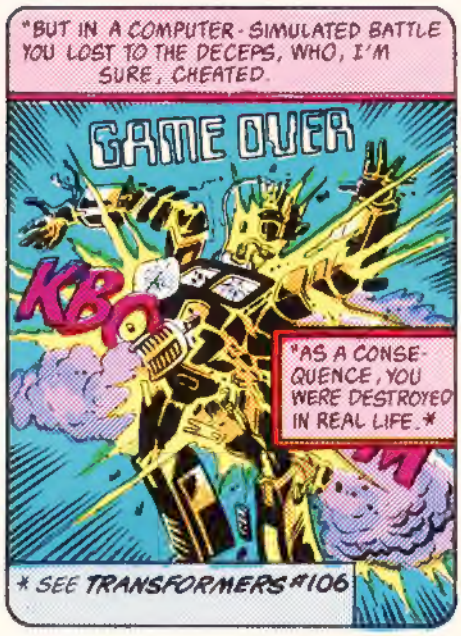
SOMEWHERE, IN A REALITY DIFFERENT FROM OUR OWN...
ONWARD, MECHABOTS!
ZZZAP
ZZZAP
ZZOW
FIGHT TILL WE PURGE THIS LAND OF THESE FOUL BOMBASTICONS!
FIGHT TILL EVERY CITIZEN OF HYPER-FAX CAN FUNCTION FREELY AGAIN!
PRETENDER TO THE THRONE!

Script **BOB BUDIANSKY** ■ Pencils **JOSE DELBO** ■ Inks **DAVE HUNT** ■ Letters **BILL OAKLEY** ■ Colour **YOMTOV**

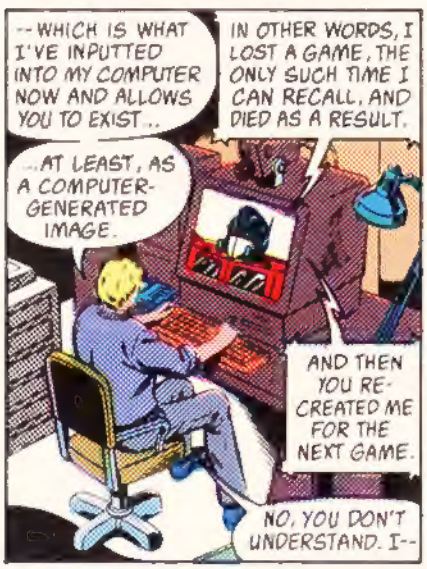

YOU CANNOT ESCAPE MY RIGHTEOUS WRATH, VILLAINS!
NO PIT IS DEEP ENOUGH, NO NIGHT BLACK ENOUGH TO HIDE YOUR FETID FORMS FROM THE BLINDING LIGHT OF JUSTICE!
KWAP
FOR AS LONG AS A SPARK EXISTS WITHIN A SINGLE MECHABOT, GOOD SHALL ALWAYS VANQUISH EVIL!
GAME OVER
SO SWEARS OPTIMUS PRIME!
SO-- WHEN DO WE START THE NEXT GAME, ETHAN ZACHARY?
SOON, BUT OPTIMUS, ER... DO YOU FEEL, UM... ANY DIFFERENT NOW, AFTER YOUR LATEST VICTORY?
DIFFERENT? FROM WHAT?
YOU'RE NOT LIKE OTHER COMPUTER GAME CHARACTERS, OPTIMUS.
I KNOW. YOU'VE TOLD ME I AM THE BEST ONE YOU EVER CREATED FOR A GAME.
WHY THEN HAVE YOU YET TO MARKET ME TO THE PUBLIC? YOU'VE BUILT AN ENTIRE COMPANY BY CREATING AND MARKETING COMPUTER GAMES.
TRUE. BUT YOU'RE MORE THAN JUST ANOTHER GAME. A LOT MORE.
ALTERNATE REALITY, INC.


WHAT AM I ?
I'M GOING TO TAP INTO YOUR MEMORY BANK AGAIN TO EXPLAIN-- MAYBE THIS TIME IT'LL WORK.

"YOU USED TO BE LEADER OF THE AUTOBOTS, A NOBLE RACE OF MECHANIZED BEINGS FROM THE PLANET CYBERTRON.
"YOU AND MANY OF YOUR FOLLOWERS CAME HERE, TO EARTH, WHERE YOU WARRED WITH YOUR EVIL ENEMIES, THE DECEPTICONS.

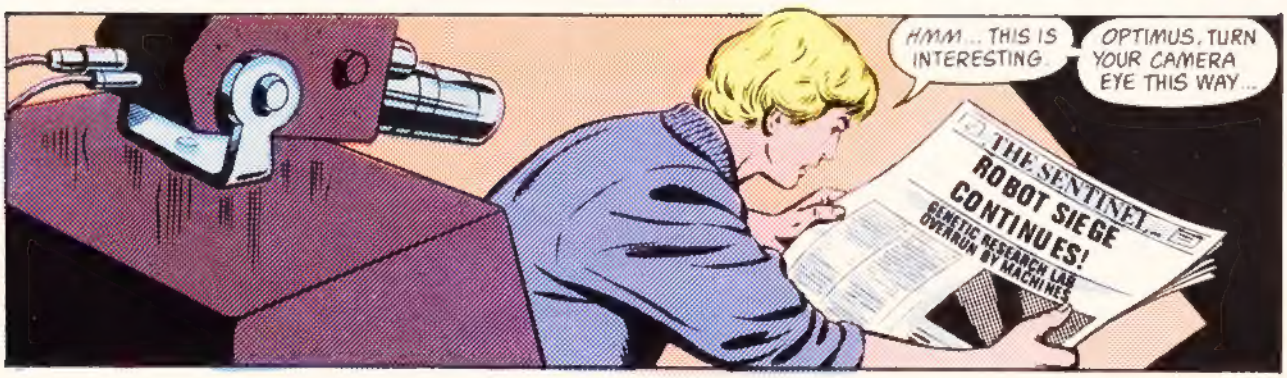

"BUT IN A COMPUTER-SIMULATED BATTLE YOU LOST TO THE DECEPS, WHO, I'M SURE, CHEATED.
GAME OVER
KBO
"AS A CONSEQUENCE, YOU WERE DESTROYED IN REAL LIFE.*
* SEE TRANSFORMERS #106

"BUT I COPIED YOUR MIND ONTO A FLOPPY DISC BEFORE THAT HAPPENED--"
OPTIMUS PRIME

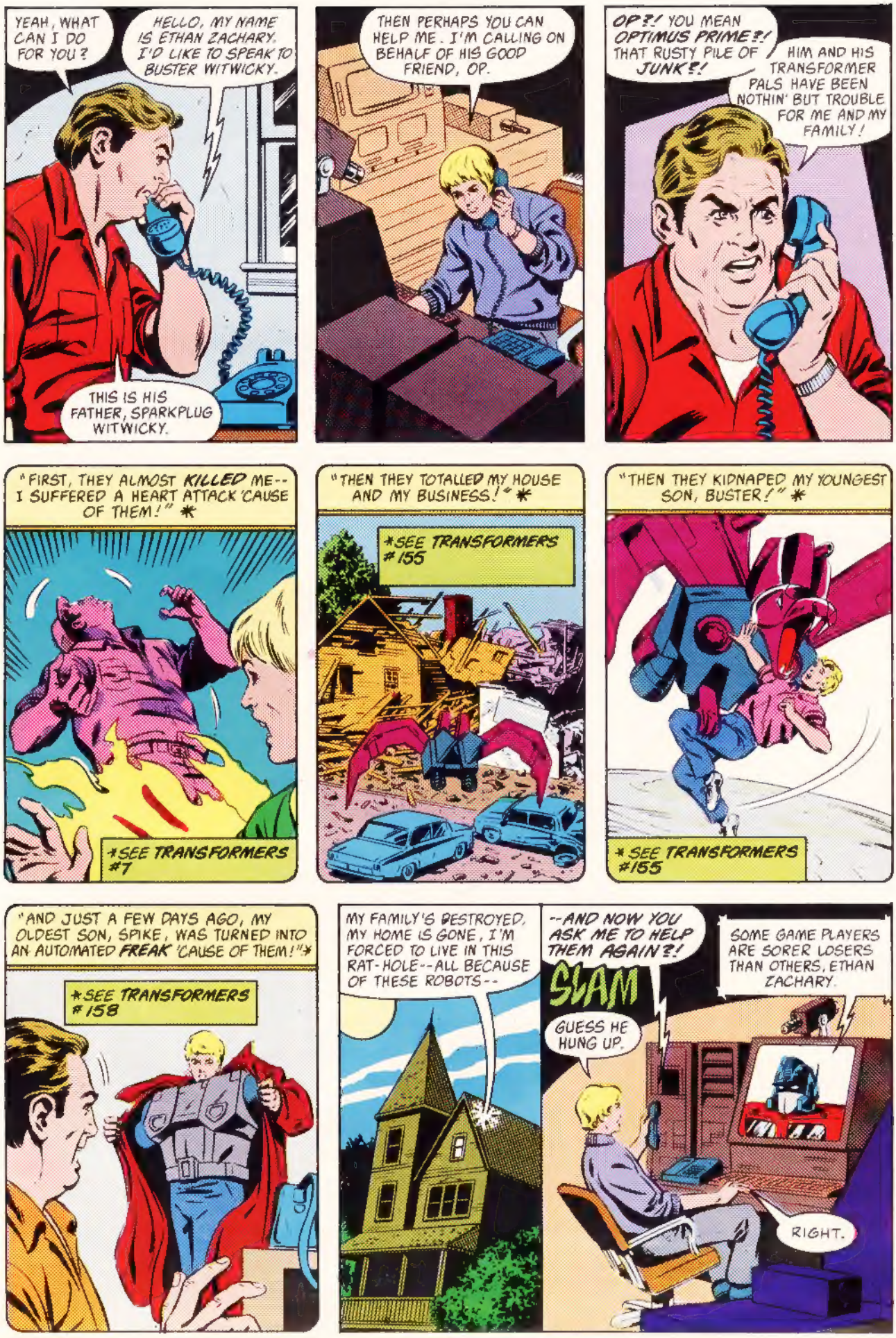

--WHICH IS WHAT I'VE INPUTTED INTO MY COMPUTER NOW AND ALLOWS YOU TO EXIST..
IN OTHER WORDS, I LOST A GAME, THE ONLY SUCH TIME I CAN RECALL, AND DIED AS A RESULT.
...AT LEAST, AS A COMPUTER-GENERATED IMAGE.
AND THEN YOU RE-CREATED ME FOR THE NEXT GAME.
NO, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. I--

EXCUSE ME, MR. ZACHARY. IT'S FIVE-THIRTY. I'M LEAVING FOR THE DAY.

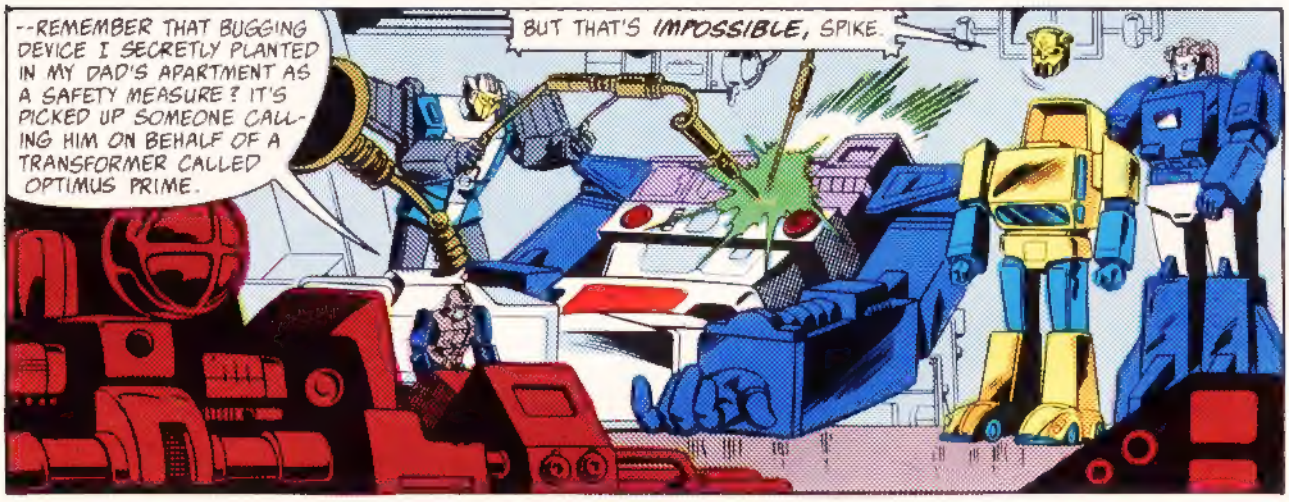
HERE'S THIS AFTERNOON'S PAPER.
THANKS, CARLA. GOOD NIGHT.
THE SENTINEL
ROBOT SIEGE CONTINUES!
GENETIC RESEARCH LAB OVERRUN BY MACHINES


HMM... THIS IS INTERESTING.
OPTIMUS, TURN YOUR CAMERA EYE THIS WAY...
THE SENTINEL
ROBOT SIEGE CONTINUES!
GENETIC RESEARCH LAB OVERRUN BY MACHINES

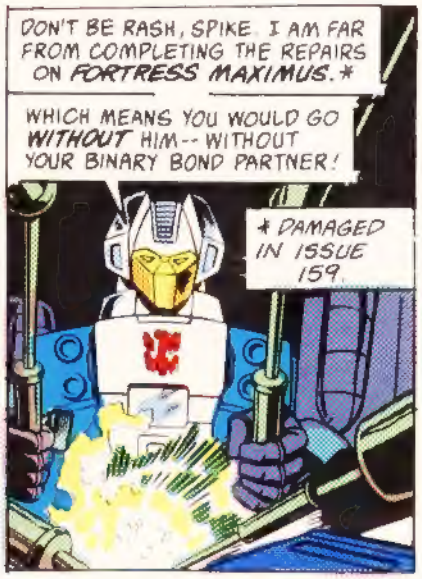
...MAYBE THIS WILL RING A BELL...
BELL? I HEAR NO SUCH SOUND.
I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT BELLS. I'M TALKING ABOUT THIS PICTURE. DOES IT MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU?
SHOULD IT? ARE THOSE IN THE GRAPHIC TO BE MY NEXT GAME OPPONENTS?
THIS IS GETTING NOWHERE!
IS THERE SOMEWHERE WE SHOULD BE GETTING?
YES. RECENTLY, I UNCOVERED ANOTHER PART OF YOUR MEMORY. I'M GOING TO ACCESS IT NOW.
THERE IT IS. TAKE A LOOK. WHAT IS IT?
THAT'S THE ARK IN A CAVE AT THE BASE OF MOUNT ST. HILARY. I REMEMBER BEING ALLIED TO ITS INHABITANTS, THE AUTOBOTS, IN MANY GAMES.
GREAT! DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT RADIO FREQUENCY YOU CONTACTED IT WITH? CAN YOU TRY TO CONTACT IT NOW?
"I AM ALREADY TRANSMITTING... BUT I DO NOT DETECT THE ARK'S PRESENCE AT THAT LOCATION.
"IT IS NO LONGER THERE."
OH.
TOO BAD. I REMEMBER THOSE AUTOBOT CHARACTERS AS BEING GREAT WARRIORS. DID YOU EDIT THEM OUT OF THE GAME?
HMM... HOW ABOUT THIS IMAGE. REMEMBER HIM?
YES. BUSTER WITWICKY. NOBLE, HEROIC, HUMAN--A GOOD FRIEND. WE SHARED SEVERAL EXCITING GAMES.
HIS PLACE OF ORIGIN WAS CALLED PORTLAND, OREGON.
GREAT! I'LL PROGRAM MY COMPUTER TO CALL EVERY WITWICKY IN PORTLAND TILL I FIND HIM.
MEANWHILE, IN A RUN-DOWN SECTION OF PORTLAND, OREGON...
YOU'D THINK THE LEAST THIS FLEA-BAG BOARDING HOUSE COULD DO...
...IS PROVIDE A TV SET THAT WORKED!
RRING

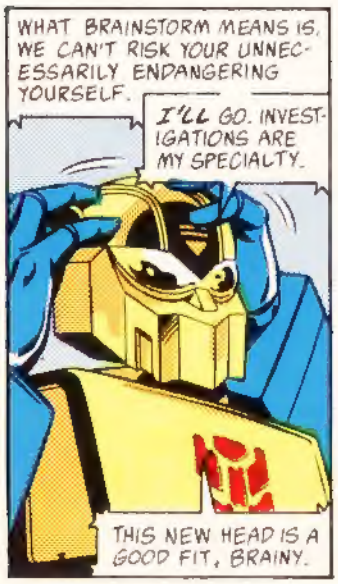

YEAH, WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?
HELLO, MY NAME IS ETHAN ZACHARY. I'D LIKE TO SPEAK TO BUSTER WITWICKY.
THIS IS HIS FATHER, SPARKPLUG WITWICKY.
THEN PERHAPS YOU CAN HELP ME. I'M CALLING ON BEHALF OF HIS GOOD FRIEND, OP.
OP?! YOU MEAN OPTIMUS PRIME?! THAT RUSTY PILE OF JUNK?!
HIM AND HIS TRANSFORMER PALS HAVE BEEN NOTHIN' BUT TROUBLE FOR ME AND MY FAMILY!
"FIRST, THEY ALMOST KILLED ME-- I SUFFERED A HEART ATTACK 'CAUSE OF THEM!" *
*SEE TRANSFORMERS #7
"THEN THEY TOTALLED MY HOUSE AND MY BUSINESS!" *
*SEE TRANSFORMERS #155
"THEN THEY KIDNAPED MY YOUNGEST SON, BUSTER!" *
*SEE TRANSFORMERS #155
"AND JUST A FEW DAYS AGO, MY OLDEST SON, SPIKE, WAS TURNED INTO AN AUTOMATED FREAK 'CAUSE OF THEM!" *
*SEE TRANSFORMERS #158
MY FAMILY'S DESTROYED, MY HOME IS GONE, I'M FORCED TO LIVE IN THIS RAT-HOLE--ALL BECAUSE OF THESE ROBOTS--
--AND NOW YOU ASK ME TO HELP THEM AGAIN?!
SLAM
GUESS HE HUNG UP.
SOME GAME PLAYERS ARE SORER LOSERS THAN OTHERS, ETHAN ZACHARY.
RIGHT.

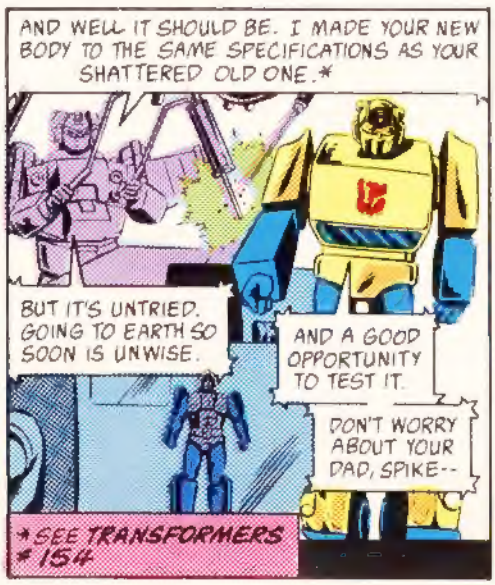
MEANWHILE, ABOARD AN AUTOBOT SPACE-CRAFT THAT HAS BEEN ORBITING THE EARTH FOR SEVERAL WEEKS NOW...
HEY, AUTOBOTS, LISTEN TO THIS--

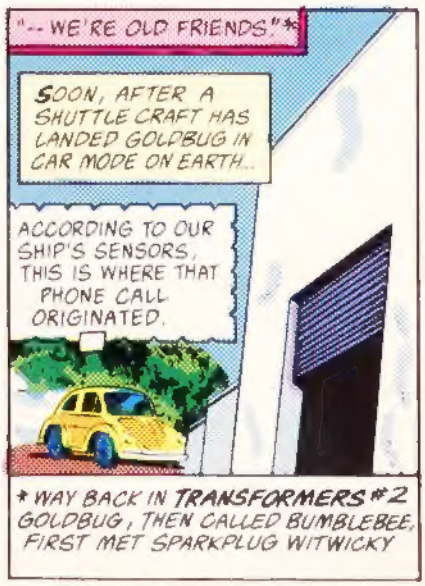

--REMEMBER THAT BUGGING DEVICE I SECRETLY PLANTED IN MY DAD'S APARTMENT AS A SAFETY MEASURE? IT'S PICKED UP SOMEONE CALLING HIM ON BEHALF OF A TRANSFORMER CALLED OPTIMUS PRIME.
BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE, SPIKE.

OPTIMUS PRIME IS DEAD!
ALTHOUGH THE OTHER AUTOBOTS ABOARD THIS SHIP HAD NOT YET ARRIVED ON EARTH WHEN OPTIMUS DIED, I WAS THERE. I SAW HIS LIFELESS BODY LAUNCHED INTO YOUR SUN FOR BURIAL.

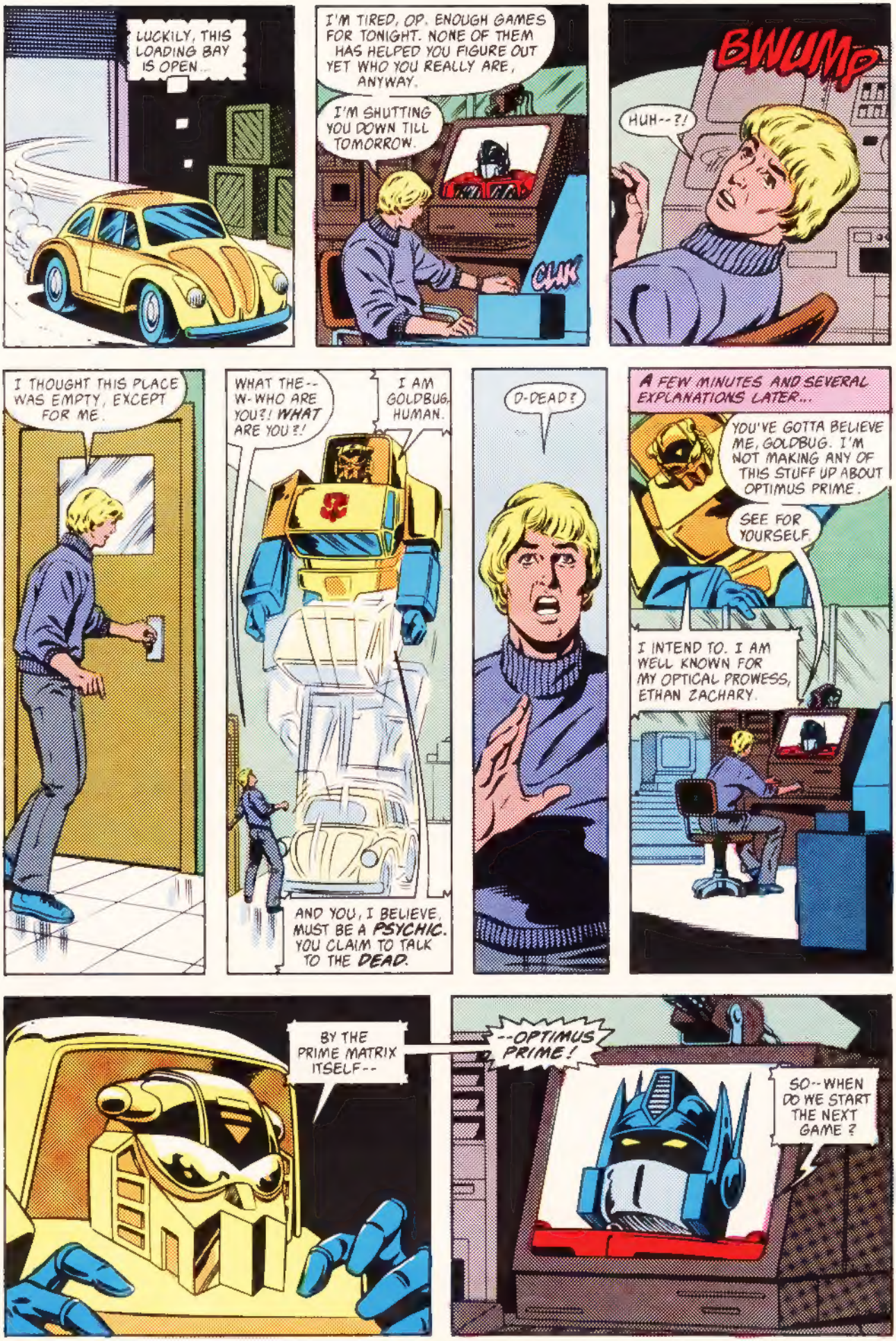

DON'T BE RASH, SPIKE. I AM FAR FROM COMPLETING THE REPAIRS ON FORTRESS MAXIMUS.*
WHICH MEANS YOU WOULD GO WITHOUT HIM-- WITHOUT YOUR BINARY BOND PARTNER!
* DAMAGED IN ISSUE 159.

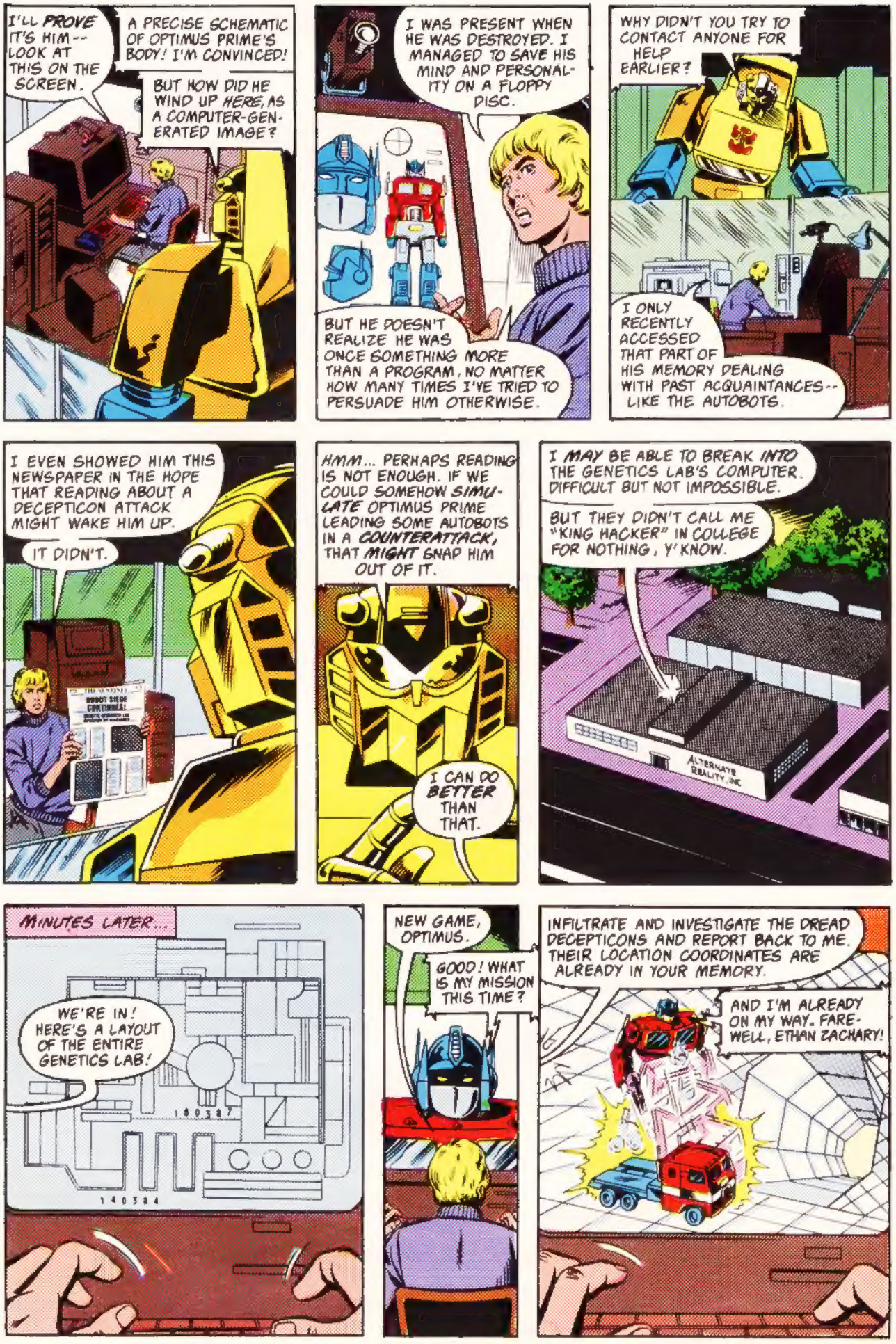

WHAT BRAINSTORM MEANS IS, WE CAN'T RISK YOUR UNNECESSARILY ENDANGERING YOURSELF.
I'LL GO. INVESTIGATIONS ARE MY SPECIALTY.
THIS NEW HEAD IS A GOOD FIT, BRAINY.

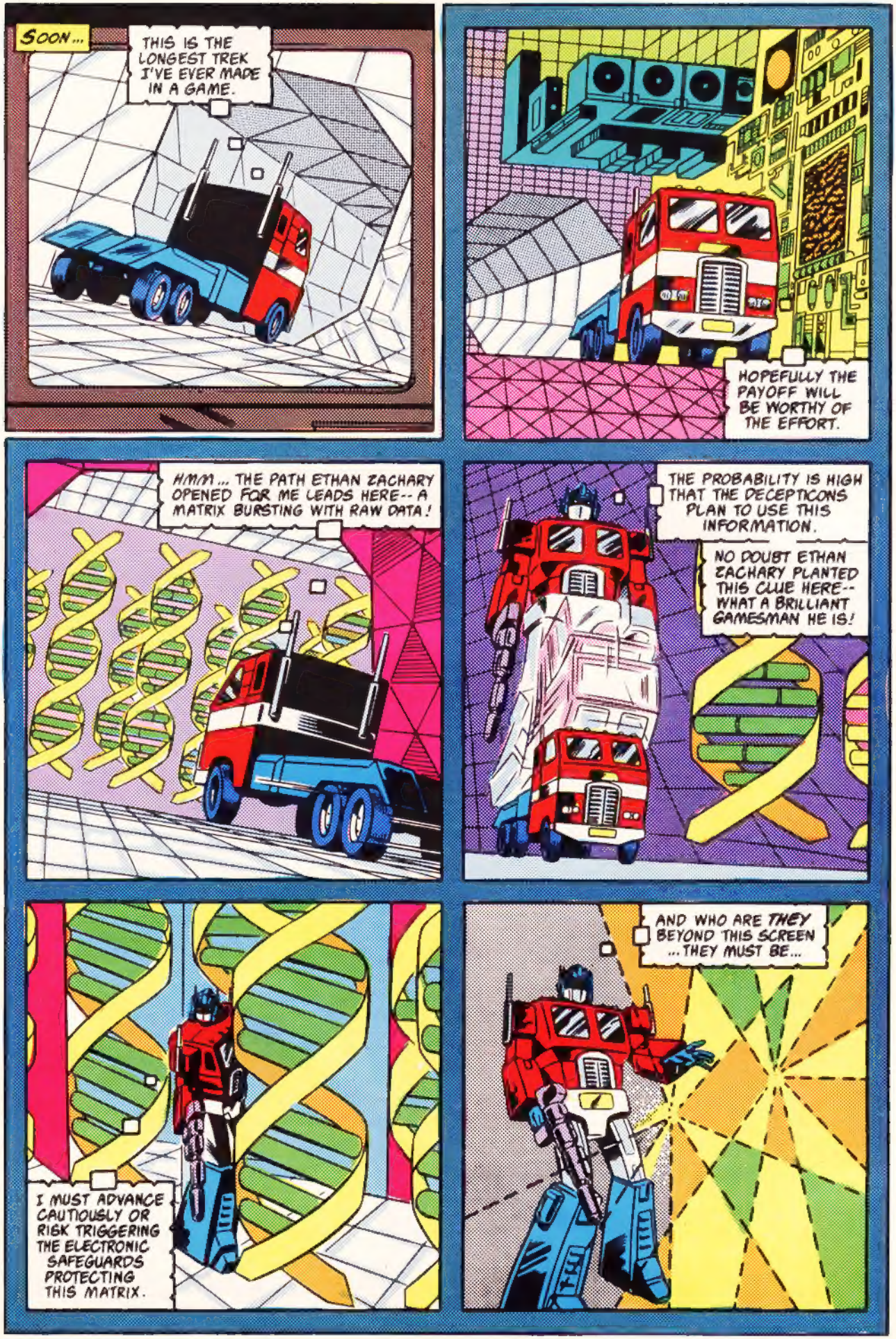

AND WELL IT SHOULD BE. I MADE YOUR NEW BODY TO THE SAME SPECIFICATIONS AS YOUR SHATTERED OLD ONE.*
BUT IT'S UNTRIED. GOING TO EARTH SO SOON IS UNWISE.
AND A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO TEST IT.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT YOUR DAD, SPIKE--
* SEE TRANSFORMERS #154

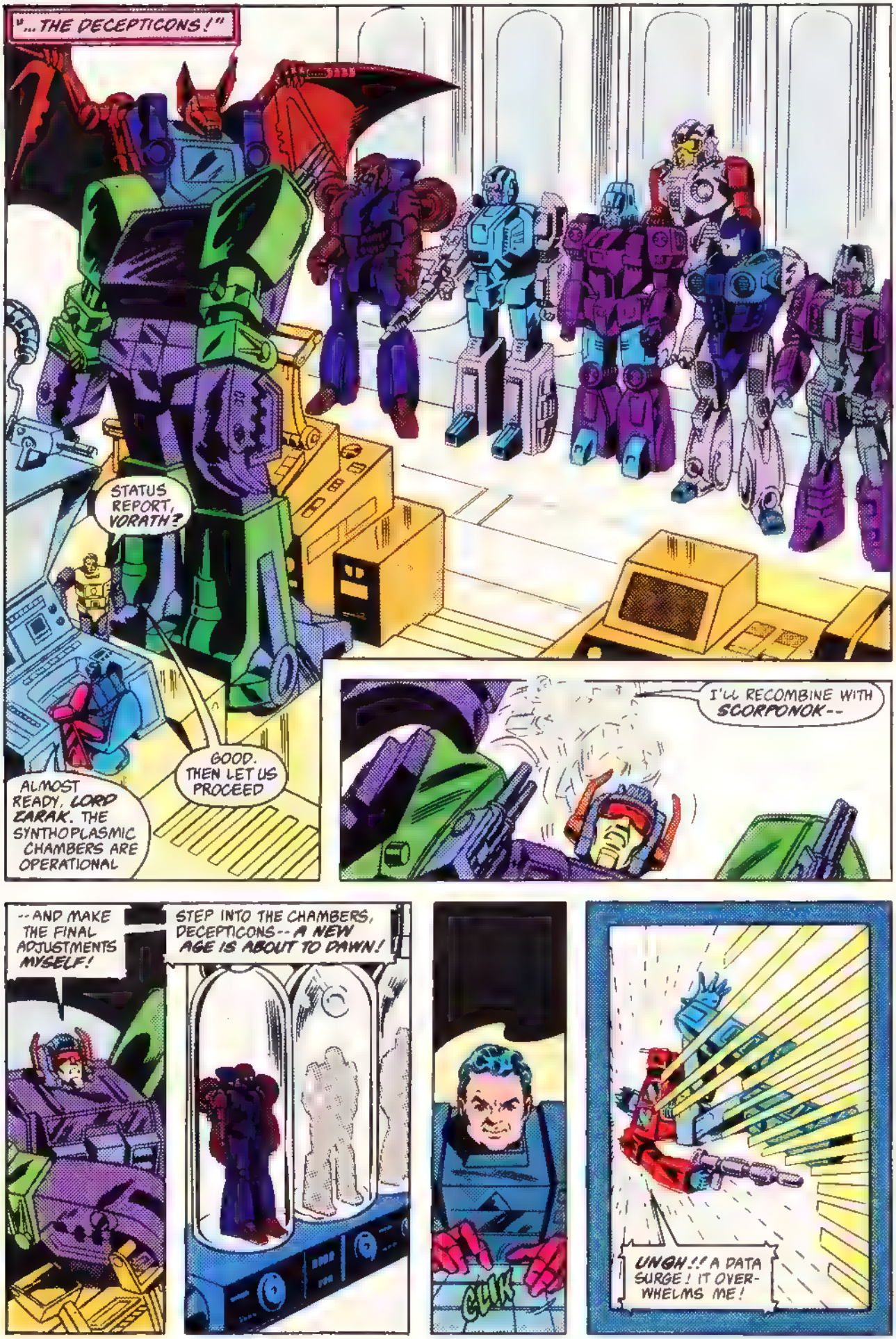

"-- WE'RE OLD FRIENDS."*
SOON, AFTER A SHUTTLE CRAFT HAS LANDED GOLDBUG IN CAR MODE ON EARTH..
ACCORDING TO OUR SHIP'S SENSORS, THIS IS WHERE THAT PHONE CALL ORIGINATED.
* WAY BACK IN TRANSFORMERS #2 GOLDBUG, THEN CALLED BUMBLEBEE, FIRST MET SPARKPLUG WITWICKY

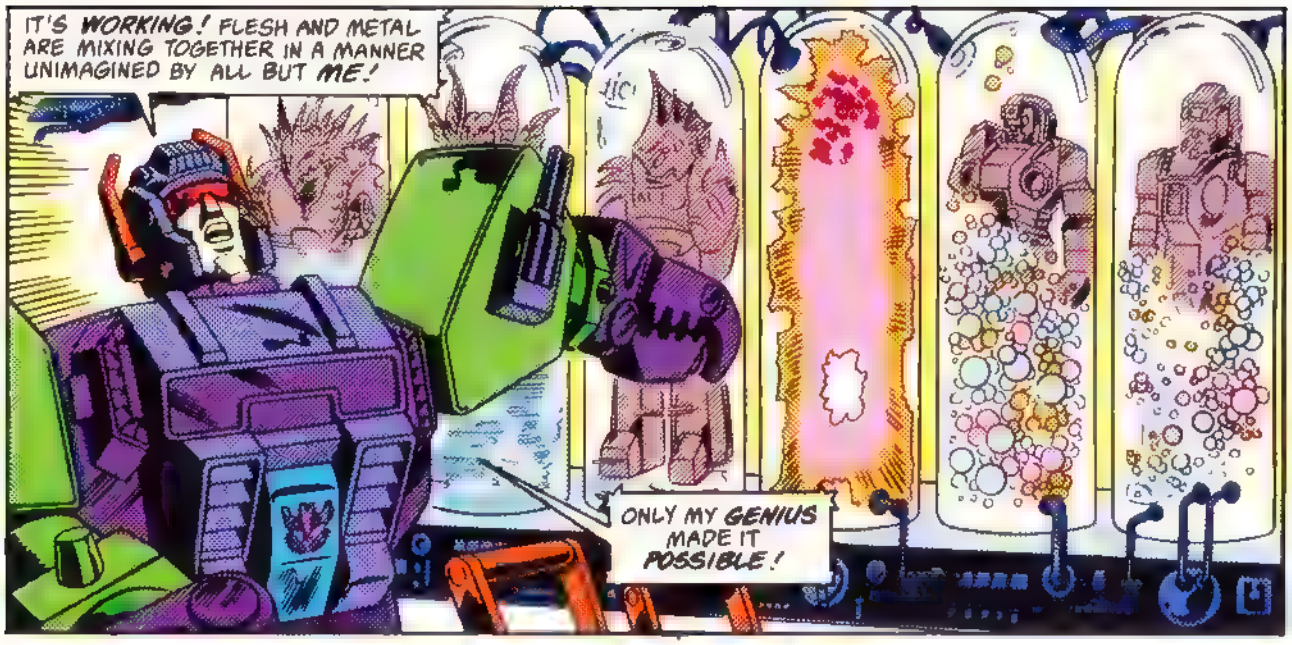
CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

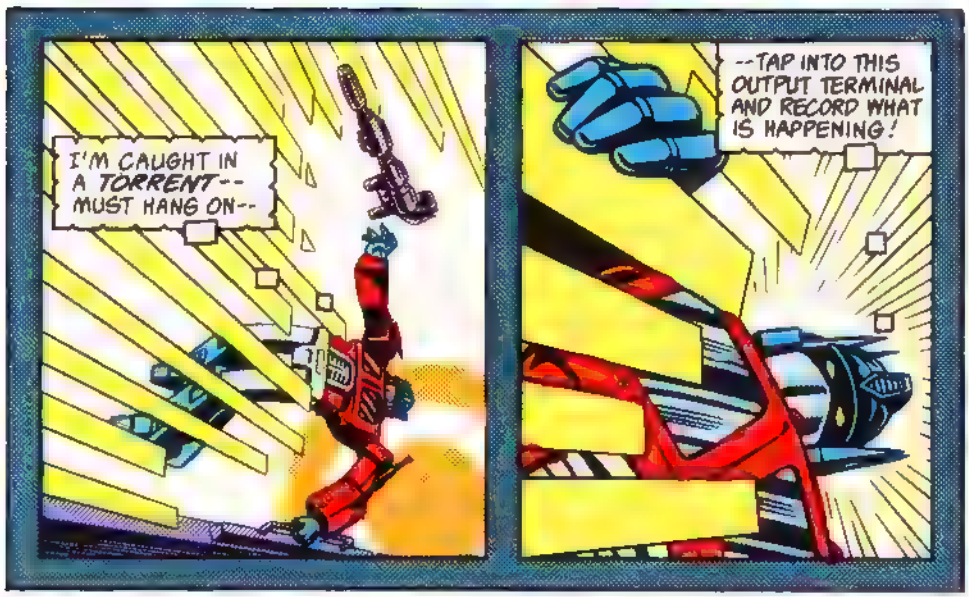

LUCKILY, THIS LOADING BAY IS OPEN...
I'M TIRED, OP. ENOUGH GAMES FOR TONIGHT. NONE OF THEM HAS HELPED YOU FIGURE OUT YET WHO YOU REALLY ARE, ANYWAY.
I'M SHUTTING YOU DOWN TILL TOMORROW.
CLIK
BWUMP
HUH--?!
I THOUGHT THIS PLACE WAS EMPTY, EXCEPT FOR ME.
WHAT THE-- W-WHO ARE YOU?! WHAT ARE YOU?!
I AM GOLDBUG. HUMAN.
AND YOU, I BELIEVE, MUST BE A PSYCHIC. YOU CLAIM TO TALK TO THE DEAD.
D-DEAD?
A FEW MINUTES AND SEVERAL EXPLANATIONS LATER...
YOU'VE GOTTA BELIEVE ME, GOLDBUG. I'M NOT MAKING ANY OF THIS STUFF UP ABOUT OPTIMUS PRIME.
SEE FOR YOURSELF
I INTEND TO. I AM WELL KNOWN FOR MY OPTICAL PROWESS, ETHAN ZACHARY.
BY THE PRIME MATRIX ITSELF--
--OPTIMUS PRIME!
SO--WHEN DO WE START THE NEXT GAME?


I'LL PROVE IT'S HIM -- LOOK AT THIS ON THE SCREEN.
A PRECISE SCHEMATIC OF OPTIMUS PRIME'S BODY! I'M CONVINCED!
BUT HOW DID HE WIND UP HERE, AS A COMPUTER-GENERATED IMAGE?
I WAS PRESENT WHEN HE WAS DESTROYED. I MANAGED TO SAVE HIS MIND AND PERSONALITY ON A FLOPPY DISC.
BUT HE DOESN'T REALIZE HE WAS ONCE SOMETHING MORE THAN A PROGRAM, NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I'VE TRIED TO PERSUADE HIM OTHERWISE.
WHY DIDN'T YOU TRY TO CONTACT ANYONE FOR HELP EARLIER?
I ONLY RECENTLY ACCESSED THAT PART OF HIS MEMORY DEALING WITH PAST ACQUAINTANCES -- LIKE THE AUTOBOTS.
I EVEN SHOWED HIM THIS NEWSPAPER IN THE HOPE THAT READING ABOUT A DECEPTICON ATTACK MIGHT WAKE HIM UP.
IT DIDN'T.
ROBOT SIEGE CONTINUES!
HMM... PERHAPS READING IS NOT ENOUGH. IF WE COULD SOMEHOW SIMULATE OPTIMUS PRIME LEADING SOME AUTOBOTS IN A COUNTERATTACK, THAT MIGHT SNAP HIM OUT OF IT.
I CAN DO BETTER THAN THAT.
I MAY BE ABLE TO BREAK INTO THE GENETICS LAB'S COMPUTER. DIFFICULT BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE.
BUT THEY DIDN'T CALL ME "KING HACKER" IN COLLEGE FOR NOTHING, Y'KNOW.
ALTERNATE REALITY, INC
MINUTES LATER...
WE'RE IN! HERE'S A LAYOUT OF THE ENTIRE GENETICS LAB!
NEW GAME, OPTIMUS.
GOOD! WHAT IS MY MISSION THIS TIME?
INFILTRATE AND INVESTIGATE THE DREAD DECEPTICONS AND REPORT BACK TO ME. THEIR LOCATION COORDINATES ARE ALREADY IN YOUR MEMORY.
AND I'M ALREADY ON MY WAY. FAREWELL, ETHAN ZACHARY!

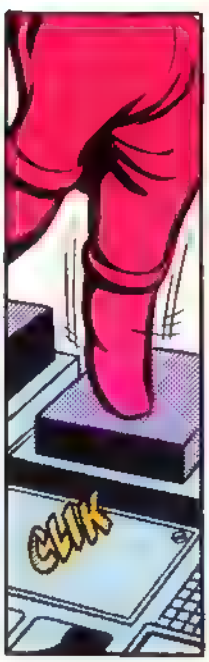

SOON...
THIS IS THE LONGEST TREK I'VE EVER MADE IN A GAME.
HOPEFULLY THE PAYOFF WILL BE WORTHY OF THE EFFORT.
HMM... THE PATH ETHAN ZACHARY OPENED FOR ME LEADS HERE-- A MATRIX BURSTING WITH RAW DATA!
THE PROBABILITY IS HIGH THAT THE DECEPTICONS PLAN TO USE THIS INFORMATION.
NO DOUBT ETHAN ZACHARY PLANTED THIS CLUE HERE-- WHAT A BRILLIANT GAMESMAN HE IS!
I MUST ADVANCE CAUTIOUSLY OR RISK TRIGGERING THE ELECTRONIC SAFEGUARDS PROTECTING THIS MATRIX.
AND WHO ARE THEY BEYOND THIS SCREEN ...THEY MUST BE...

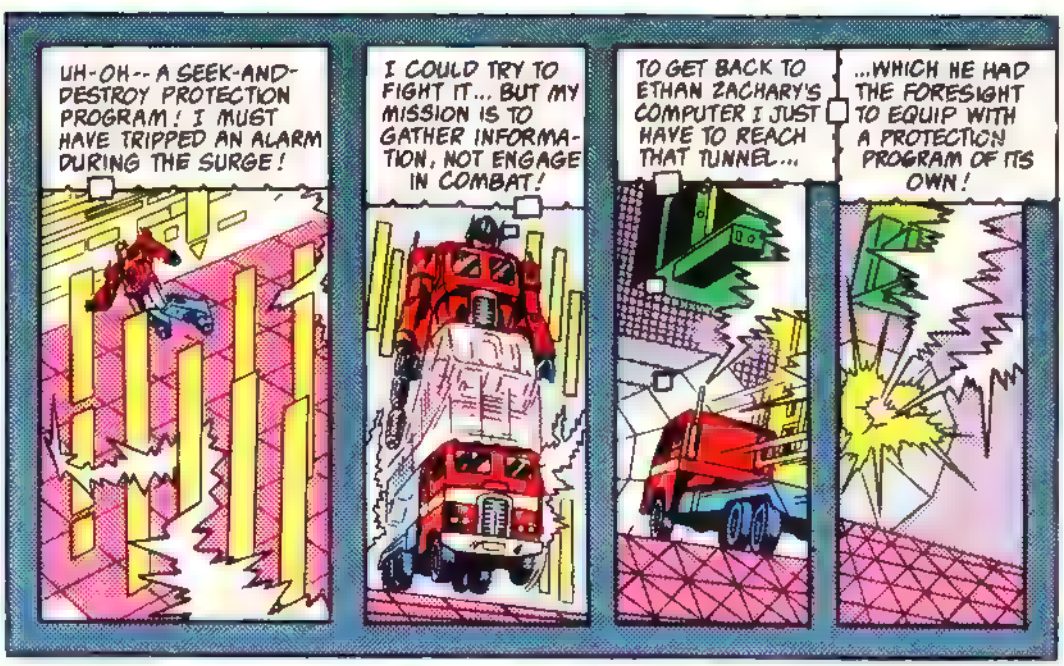

"...THE DECEPTICONS!"
STATUS REPORT, VORATH?
ALMOST READY, LORD ZARAK. THE SYNTHOPLASMIC CHAMBERS ARE OPERATIONAL
GOOD. THEN LET US PROCEED
I'll RECOMBINE WITH SCORPONOK--
--AND MAKE THE FINAL ADJUSTMENTS MYSELF!
STEP INTO THE CHAMBERS, DECEPTICONS-- A NEW AGE IS ABOUT TO DAWN!
CLICK
UNGH!! A DATA SURGE! IT OVER-WHELMS ME!

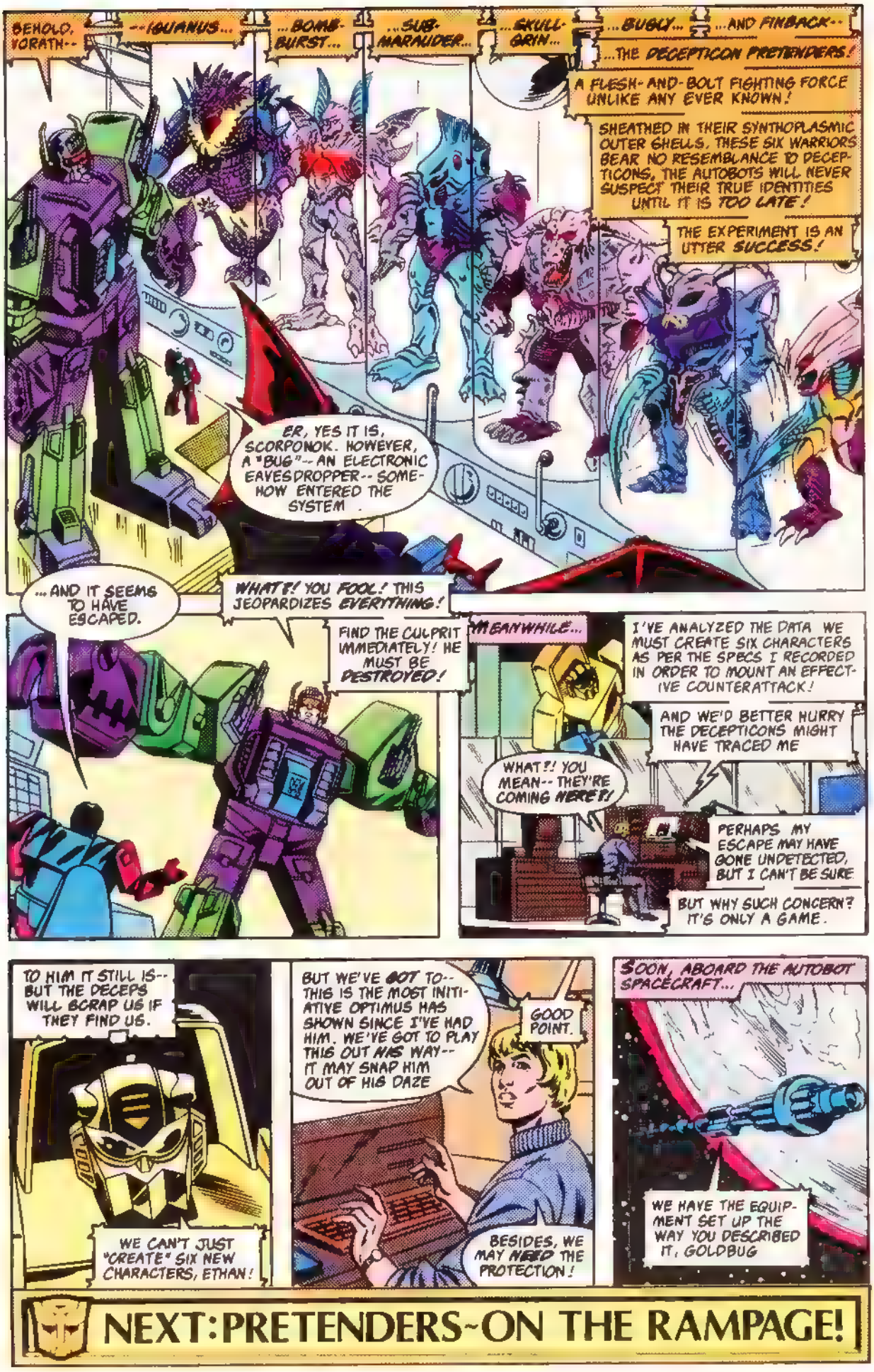

IT'S WORKING! FLESH AND METAL ARE MIXING TOGETHER IN A MANNER UNIMAGINED BY ALL BUT ME!
ONLY MY GENIUS MADE IT POSSIBLE!


I'M CAUGHT IN A TORRENT-- MUST HANG ON--
--TAP INTO THIS OUTPUT TERMINAL AND RECORD WHAT IS HAPPENING!

INTRUDER ALERT SIGNAL?! SOMEONE MUST HAVE GOTTEN PAST THE FILE WALL AND INTO THE SYSTEM!
BUT I'LL MAKE HIS VISIT SHORT-- THIS DEBUGGING SEQUENCE WILL ERAGE HIM FOREVER!


CHK


UH-OH-- A SEEK-AND-DESTROY PROTECTION PROGRAM! I MUST HAVE TRIPPED AN ALARM DURING THE SURGE!
I COULD TRY TO FIGHT IT... BUT MY MISSION IS TO GATHER INFORMATION, NOT ENGAGE IN COMBAT!
TO GET BACK TO ETHAN ZACHARY'S COMPUTER I JUST HAVE TO REACH THAT TUNNEL...
...WHICH HE HAD THE FORESIGHT TO EQUIP WITH A PROTECTION PROGRAM OF ITS OWN!


BEHOLD, VORATH--
--IGUANUS...
...BOMB-BURST...
...SUB-MARAUDER...
...SKULL-GRIN...
...BUGLY...
...AND FINBACK--
...THE DECEPTICON PRETENDERS!
A FLESH-AND-BOLT FIGHTING FORCE UNLIKE ANY EVER KNOWN!
SHEATHED IN THEIR SYNTHOPLASMIC OUTER SHELLS, THESE SIX WARRIORS BEAR NO RESEMBLANCE TO DECEPTICONS, THE AUTOBOTS WILL NEVER SUSPECT THEIR TRUE IDENTITIES UNTIL IT IS TOO LATE!
THE EXPERIMENT IS AN UTTER SUCCESS!
ER, YES IT IS, SCORPONOK. HOWEVER, A "BUG"-- AN ELECTRONIC EAVESDROPPER-- SOMEHOW ENTERED THE SYSTEM.
...AND IT SEEMS TO HAVE ESCAPED.
WHAT?! YOU FOOL! THIS JEOPARDIZES EVERYTHING!
FIND THE CULPRIT IMMEDIATELY! HE MUST BE DESTROYED!
MEANWHILE...
I'VE ANALYZED THE DATA WE MUST CREATE SIX CHARACTERS AS PER THE SPECS I RECORDED IN ORDER TO MOUNT AN EFFECTIVE COUNTERATTACK!
AND WE'D BETTER HURRY THE DECEPTICONS MIGHT HAVE TRACED ME
WHAT?! YOU MEAN-- THEY'RE COMING HERE?!
PERHAPS MY ESCAPE MAY HAVE GONE UNDETECTED, BUT I CAN'T BE SURE.
BUT WHY SUCH CONCERN? IT'S ONLY A GAME.
TO HIM IT STILL IS-- BUT THE DECEPS WILL SCRAP US IF THEY FIND US.
WE CAN'T JUST "CREATE" SIX NEW CHARACTERS, ETHAN!
BUT WE'VE GOT TO-- THIS IS THE MOST INITIATIVE OPTIMUS HAS SHOWN SINCE I'VE HAD HIM. WE'VE GOT TO PLAY THIS OUT HIS WAY-- IT MAY SNAP HIM OUT OF HIS DAZE
GOOD POINT.
BESIDES, WE MAY NEED THE PROTECTION!
SOON, ABOARD THE AUTOBOT SPACECRAFT...
WE HAVE THE EQUIPMENT SET UP THE WAY YOU DESCRIBED IT, GOLDBUG
NEXT: PRETENDERS-ON THE RAMPAGE!

MARVEL

TRANS FORMERS TOYS TO BE WON INSIDE!

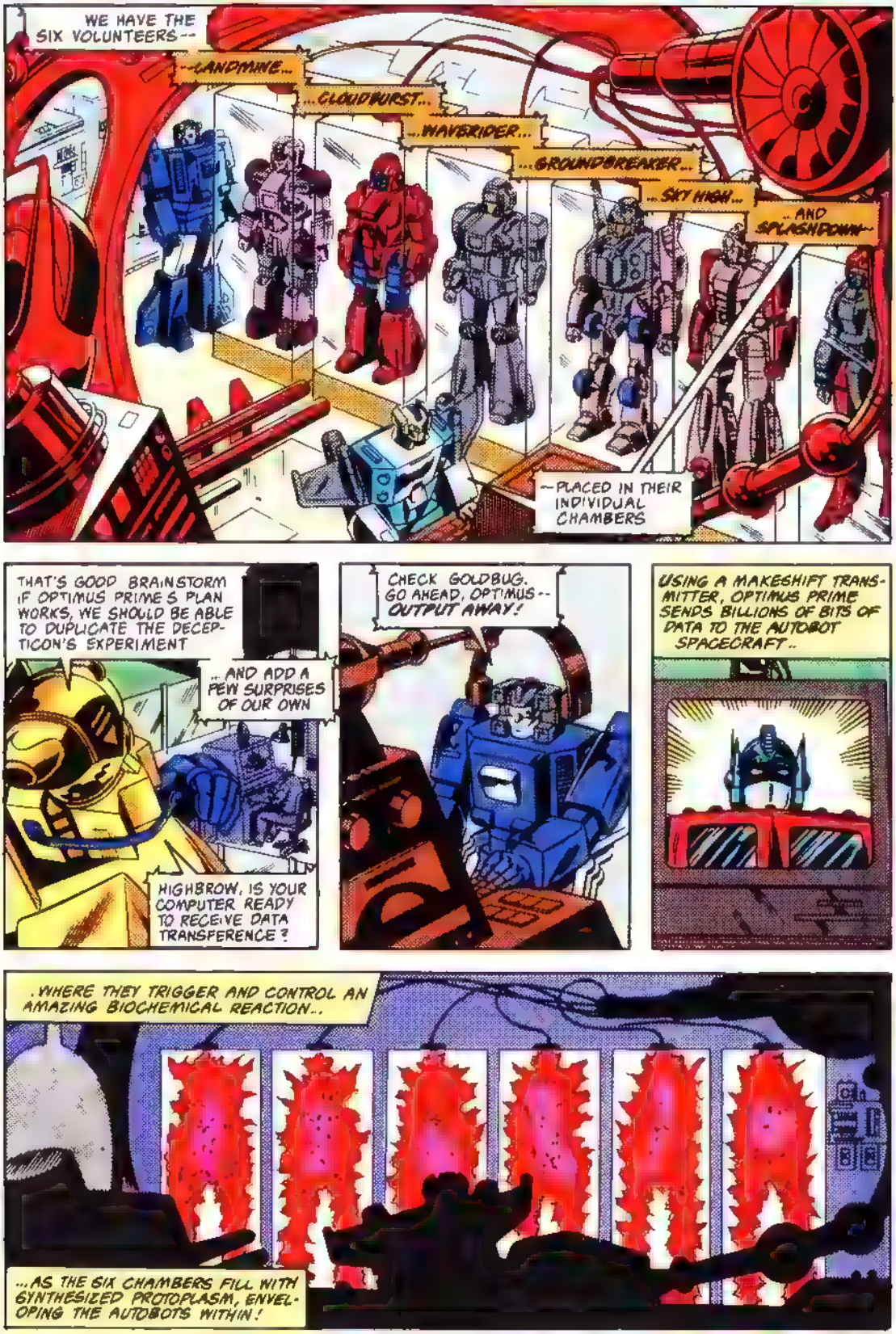
30th Apr.88
№163 32p

THE TRANSFORMERS™

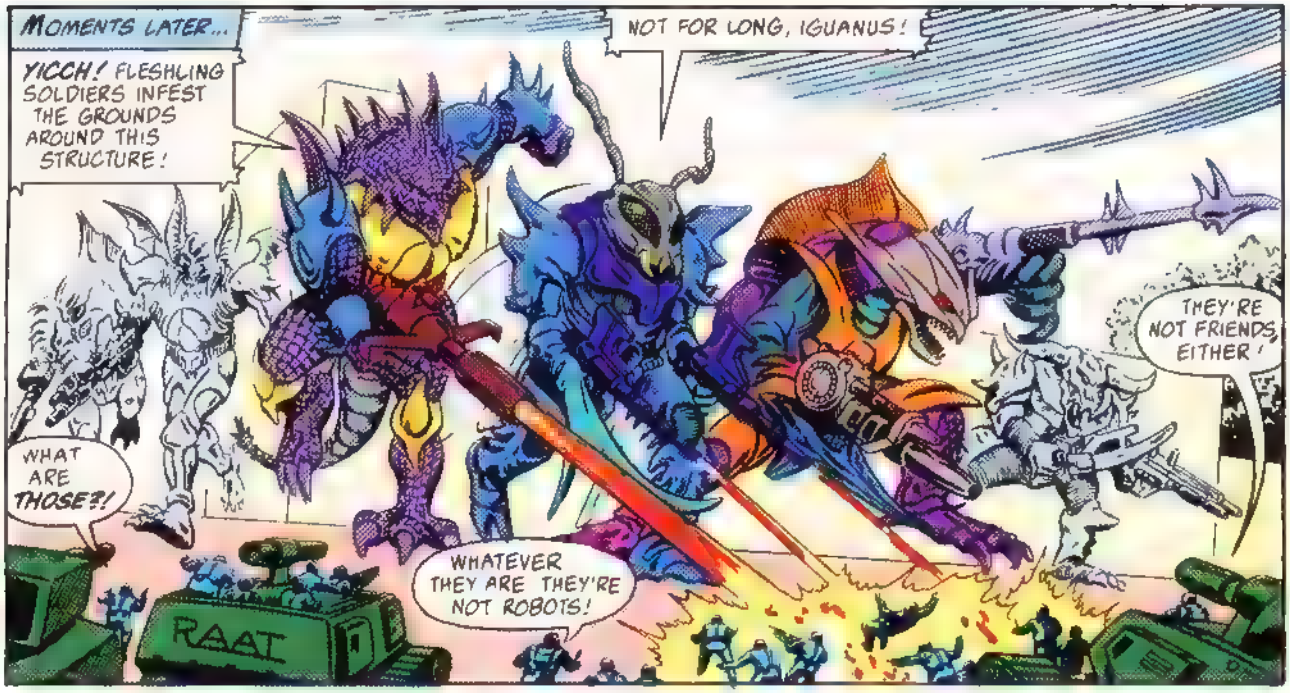
and

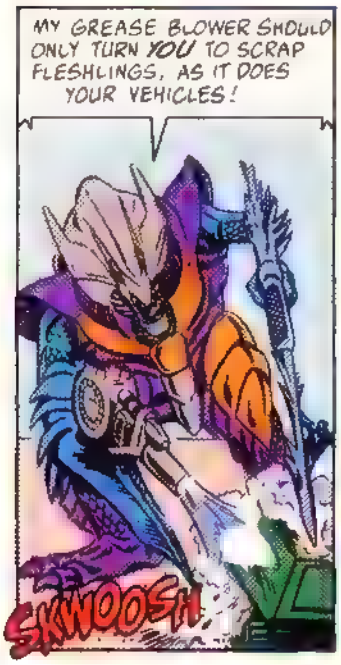
ACTION FORCE™

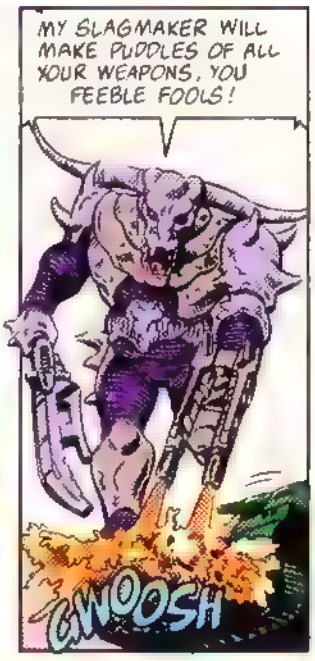
PRETENDERS - THE ULTIMATE WARRIORS!

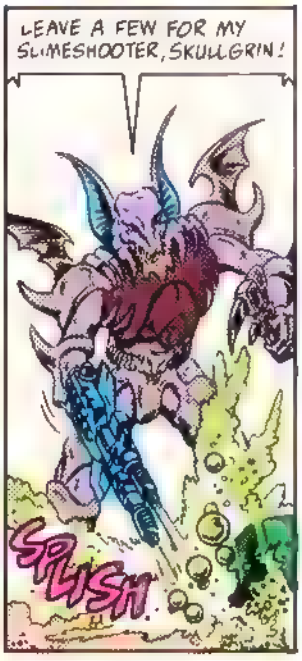

WE HAVE THE SIX VOLUNTEERS--
--LANDMINE...
...CLOUDBURST...
...WAVERIDER...
...GROUNDBREAKER...
...SKY HIGH...
...AND SPLASHDOWN--
--PLACED IN THEIR INDIVIDUAL CHAMBERS
THAT'S GOOD BRAINSTORM IF OPTIMUS PRIME'S PLAN WORKS, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO DUPLICATE THE DECEPTICON'S EXPERIMENT
...AND ADD A FEW SURPRISES OF OUR OWN
HIGHBROW, IS YOUR COMPUTER READY TO RECEIVE DATA TRANSFERENCE?
CHECK GOLDBUG. GO AHEAD, OPTIMUS-- OUTPUT AWAY!
USING A MAKESHIFT TRANSMITTER, OPTIMUS PRIME SENDS BILLIONS OF BITS OF DATA TO THE AUTOBOT SPACECRAFT..
...WHERE THEY TRIGGER AND CONTROL AN AMAZING BIOCHEMICAL REACTION..
...AS THE SIX CHAMBERS FILL WITH SYNTHESIZED PROTOPLASM, ENVELOPING THE AUTOBOTS WITHIN!

THE PROCEDURE IS NEARING COMPLETION, GOLDBUG. WE'LL BE SENDING THE SIX TO EARTH MOMENTARILY.
THEN THERE'S NO TIME TO WASTE. NOW THAT WE HAVE SET THE TRAP IT'S TIME TO BAIT IT
ETHAN ZACHARY, OPEN A PATH FOR ME BACK TO THE DECEPTICONS' BASE
NO WAY! YOU WERE ALMOST BLASTED INTO RANDOM NUMBERS THE LAST TIME!
BUT I AM THE BAIT
YOU DIED ONCE, OPTIMUS PRIME. I CAN'T LET YOU DIE AGAIN.
BUT LOOK AT THE COURAGE HE'S SHOWING, GOLDBUG. IF WE'RE TO HAVE ANY HOPE OF CURING HIM, WE MUST LET HIM DO THIS!
BESIDES, IF I DIE YOU CAN ALWAYS RE-CREATE ME
ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
SOON...
CURIOUS THAT ETHAN ZACHARY AND GOLDBUG EXHIBIT SO MUCH CONCERN FOR A COMPUTER-GENERATED CHARACTER LIKE ME
AHH-- A FILE WALL. ALL I HAVE TO DO IS GRAZE IT..
WHAT?! INTRUDER ALERT.. AGAIN?!
THE "BUG" IS BACK, SCORPONOK! I'LL MAKE SURE HE'S DUMPED PERMANENTLY THIS TIME!
NO! IF OUR VISITOR HAS RETURNED, THEN CLEARLY THERE'S MORE AFOOT HERE THAN WE KNOW.
INPUT ME INTO THE COMPUTER, VORATH. I WILL FIND AND DESTROY OUR VISITOR MYSELF-- AFTER I FIND OUT WHO SENT HIM.
BESIDES, DESTROYING THAT "WHO" WILL BE A GOOD WAY FOR OUR PRETENDERS TO TRY OUT THEIR NEW POWERS, WILL IT NOT?
WE'RE ON OUR WAY, BOSS.

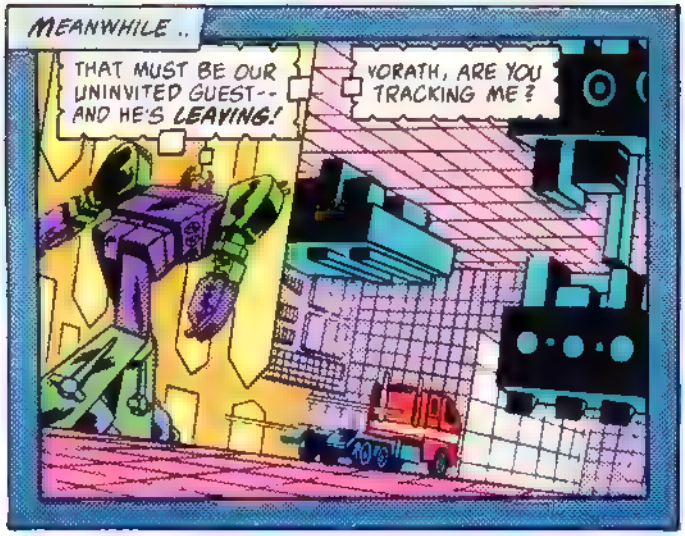

MOMENTS LATER...
YICCH! FLESHLING SOLDIERS INFEST THE GROUNDS AROUND THIS STRUCTURE!
NOT FOR LONG, IGUANUS!
THEY'RE NOT FRIENDS, EITHER!
WHAT ARE THOSE?!
WHATEVER THEY ARE THEY'RE NOT ROBOTS!
RAAT

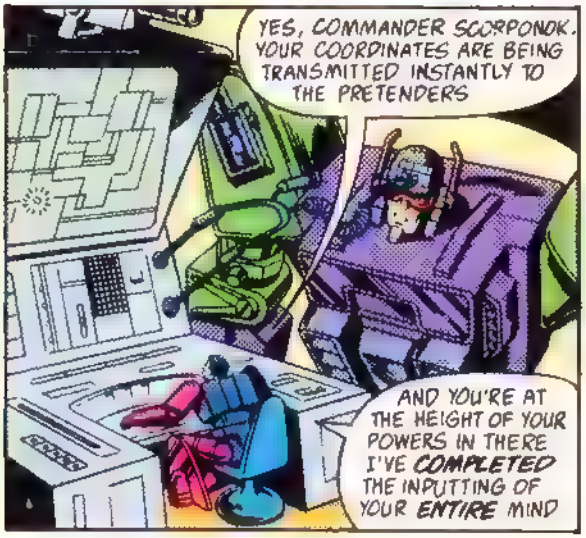

MY GREASE BLOWER SHOULD ONLY TURN YOU TO SCRAP FLESHLINGS, AS IT DOES YOUR VEHICLES!
SKWOOSH

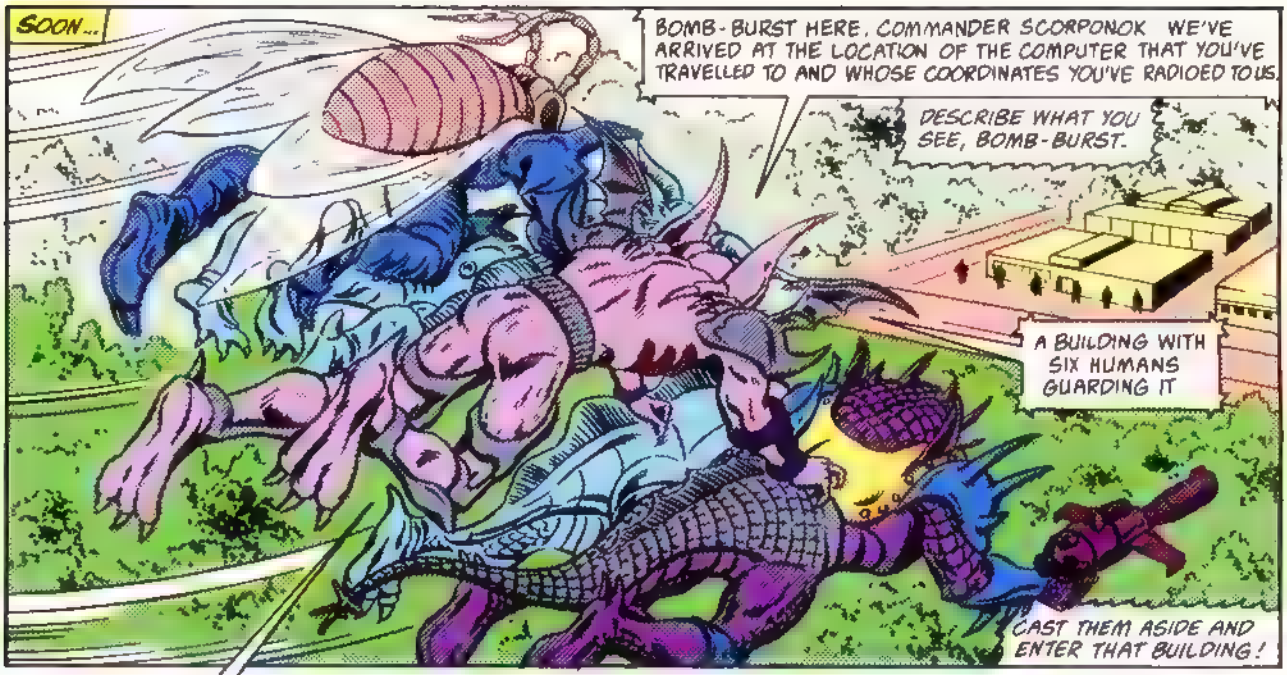

MY SLAGMAKER WILL MAKE PUDDLES OF ALL YOUR WEAPONS, YOU FEEBLE FOOLS!
GWOOSH

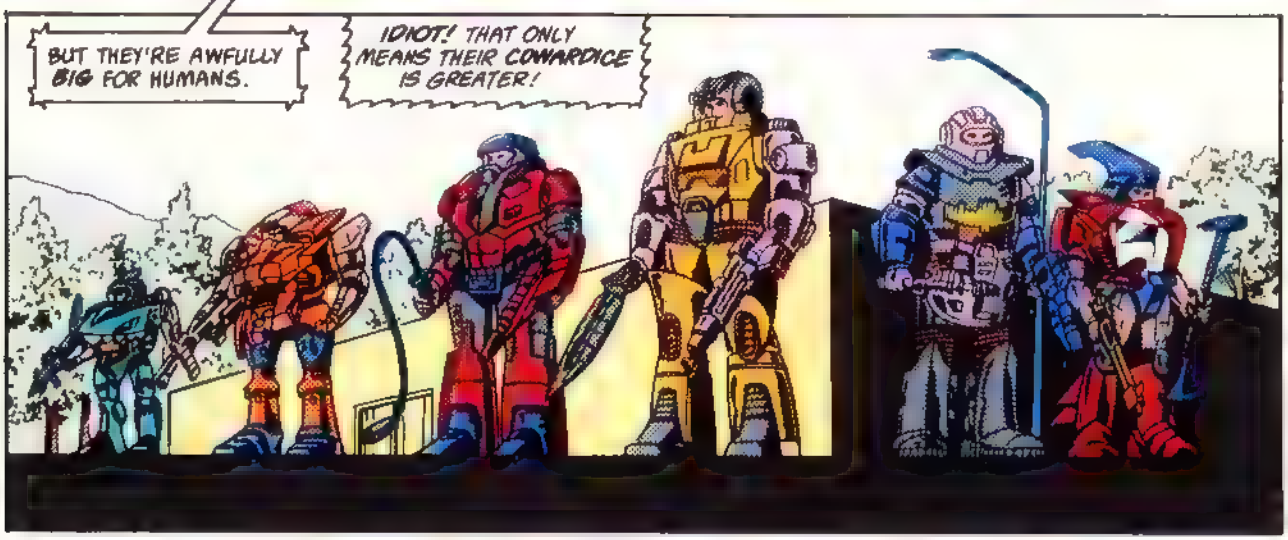

LEAVE A FEW FOR MY SLIMESHOOTER, SKULLGRIN!
SPLISH

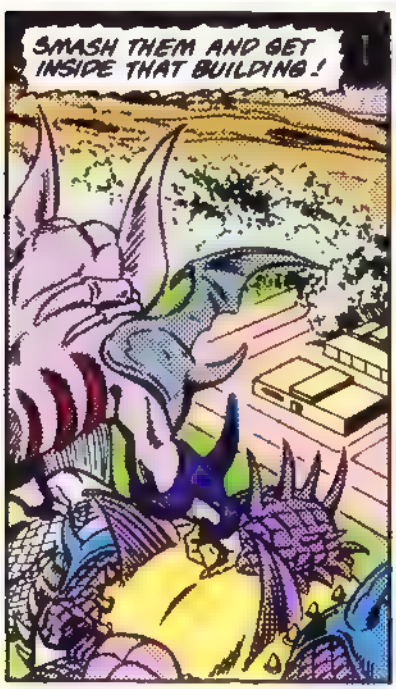
A COUPLE MORE TORPEDO BLASTS AND OUR PATH WILL BE CLEAR!
BWOMP


MEANWHILE..
THAT MUST BE OUR UNINVITED GUEST-- AND HE'S LEAVING!
VORATH, ARE YOU TRACKING ME?

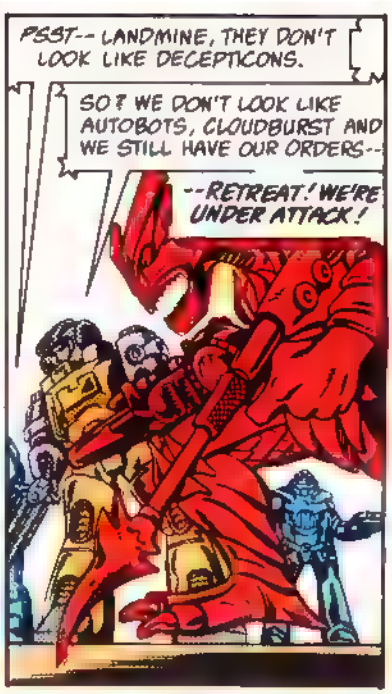

YES, COMMANDER SCORPONOK. YOUR COORDINATES ARE BEING TRANSMITTED INSTANTLY TO THE PRETENDERS
AND YOU'RE AT THE HEIGHT OF YOUR POWERS IN THERE I'VE COMPLETED THE INPUTTING OF YOUR ENTIRE MIND

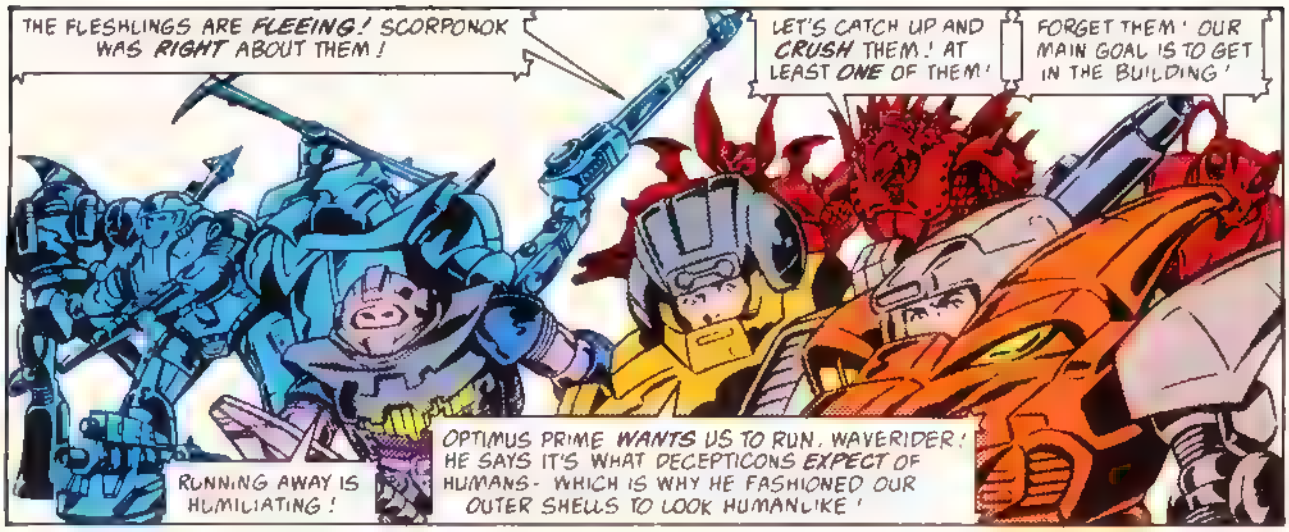

SOON...
BOMB-BURST HERE, COMMANDER SCORPONOK WE'VE ARRIVED AT THE LOCATION OF THE COMPUTER THAT YOU'VE TRAVELLED TO AND WHOSE COORDINATES YOU'VE RADIOED TO US.
DESCRIBE WHAT YOU SEE, BOMB-BURST.
A BUILDING WITH SIX HUMANS GUARDING IT
CAST THEM ASIDE AND ENTER THAT BUILDING!

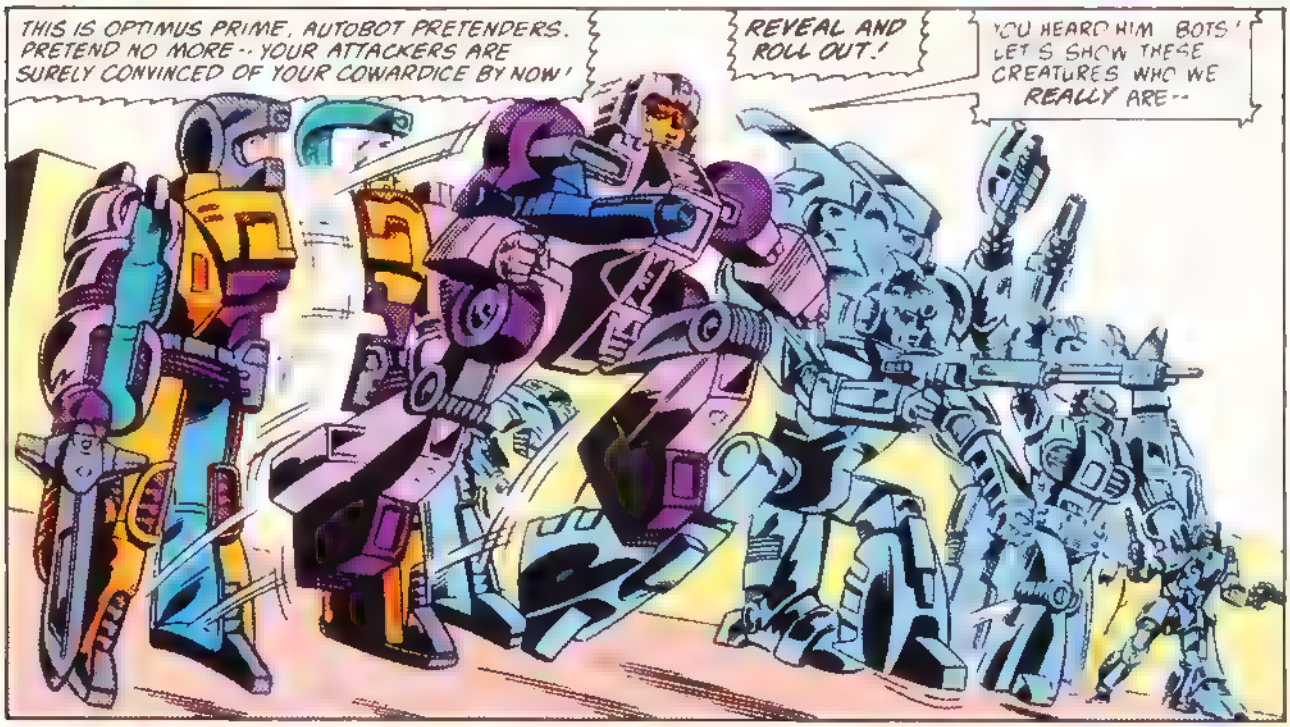

BUT THEY'RE AWFULLY BIG FOR HUMANS.
IDIOT! THAT ONLY MEANS THEIR COWARDICE IS GREATER!

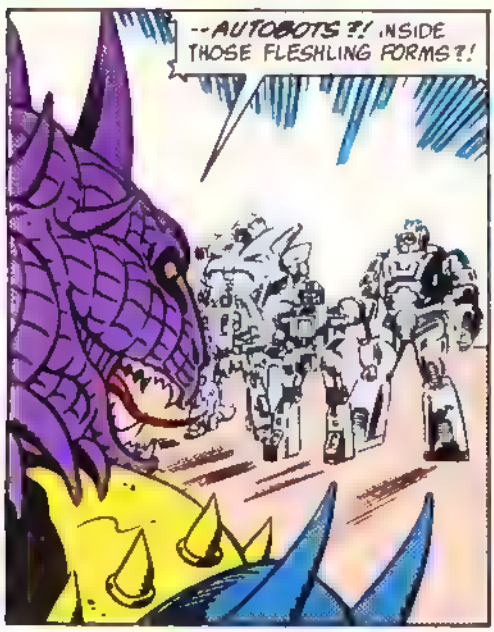

SMASH THEM AND GET INSIDE THAT BUILDING!

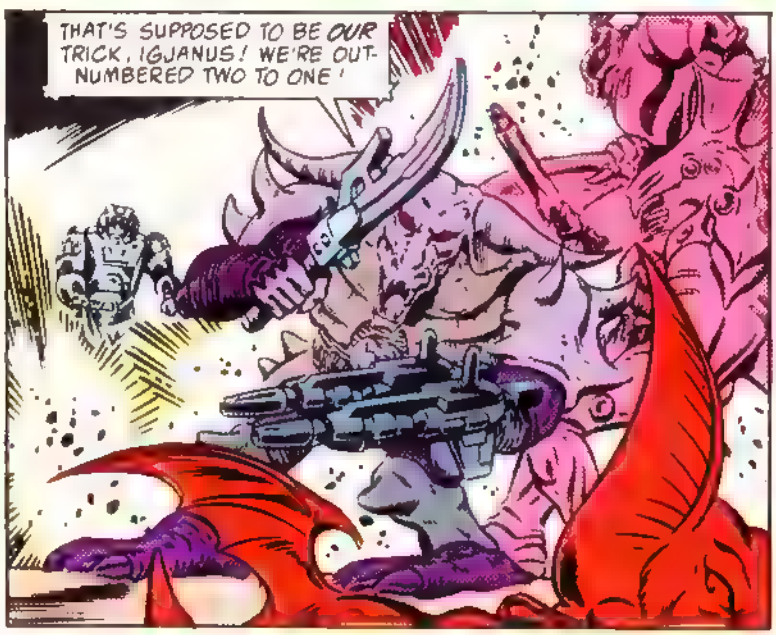
SOUNDS LIKE A GOOD IDEA TO ME.
I WANT THE FLESHLING ON THE RIGHT

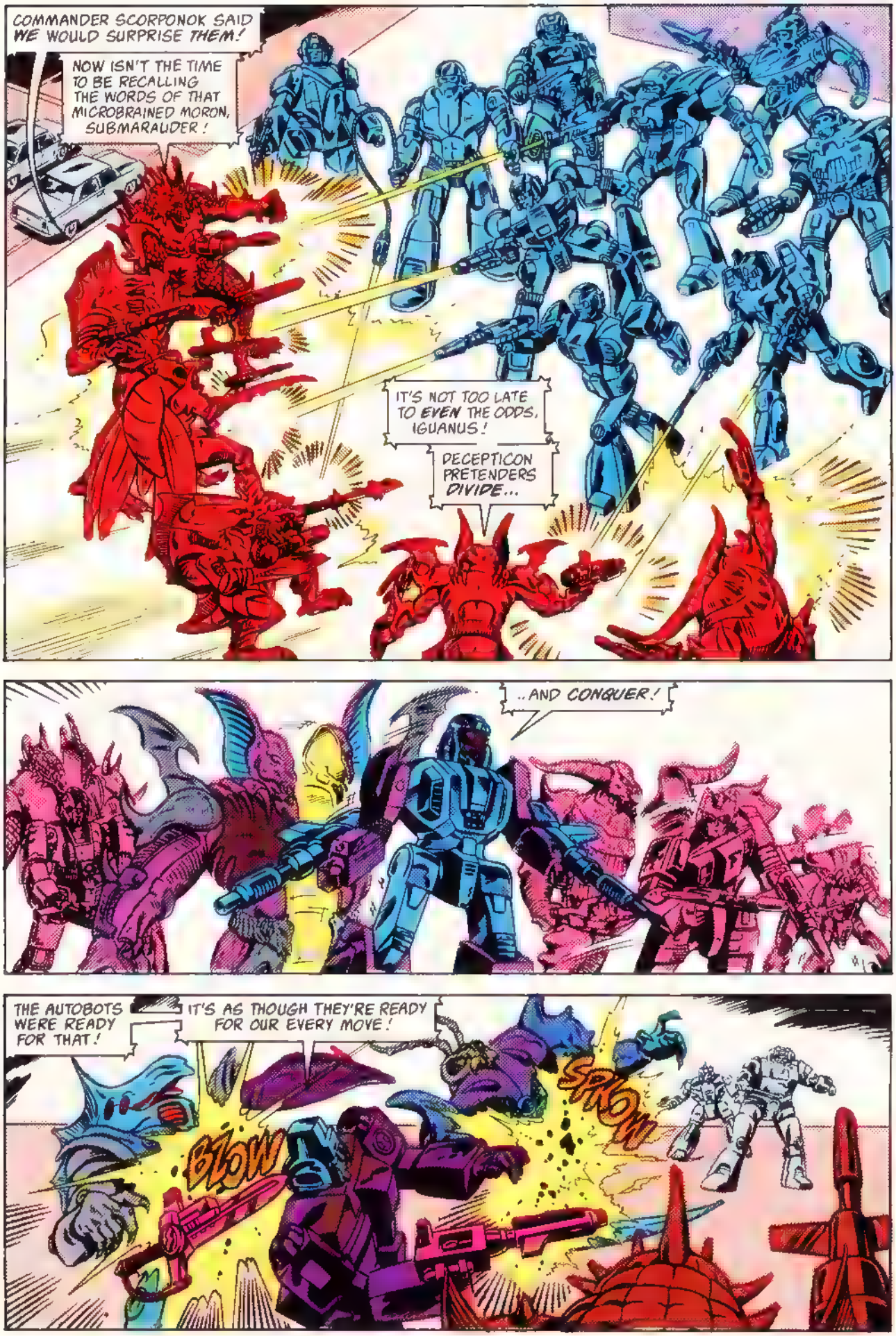

PSST-- LANDMINE, THEY DON'T LOOK LIKE DECEPTICONS.
SO? WE DON'T LOOK LIKE AUTOBOTS, CLOUDBURST AND WE STILL HAVE OUR ORDERS--
--RETREAT! WE'RE UNDER ATTACK!


THE FLESHLINGS ARE FLEEING! SCORPONOK WAS RIGHT ABOUT THEM!
LET'S CATCH UP AND CRUSH THEM! AT LEAST ONE OF THEM!
FORGET THEM! OUR MAIN GOAL IS TO GET IN THE BUILDING!
RUNNING AWAY IS HUMILIATING!
OPTIMUS PRIME WANTS US TO RUN, WAVERIDER! HE SAYS IT'S WHAT DECEPTICONS EXPECT OF HUMANS- WHICH IS WHY HE FASHIONED OUR OUTER SHELLS TO LOOK HUMANLIKE!

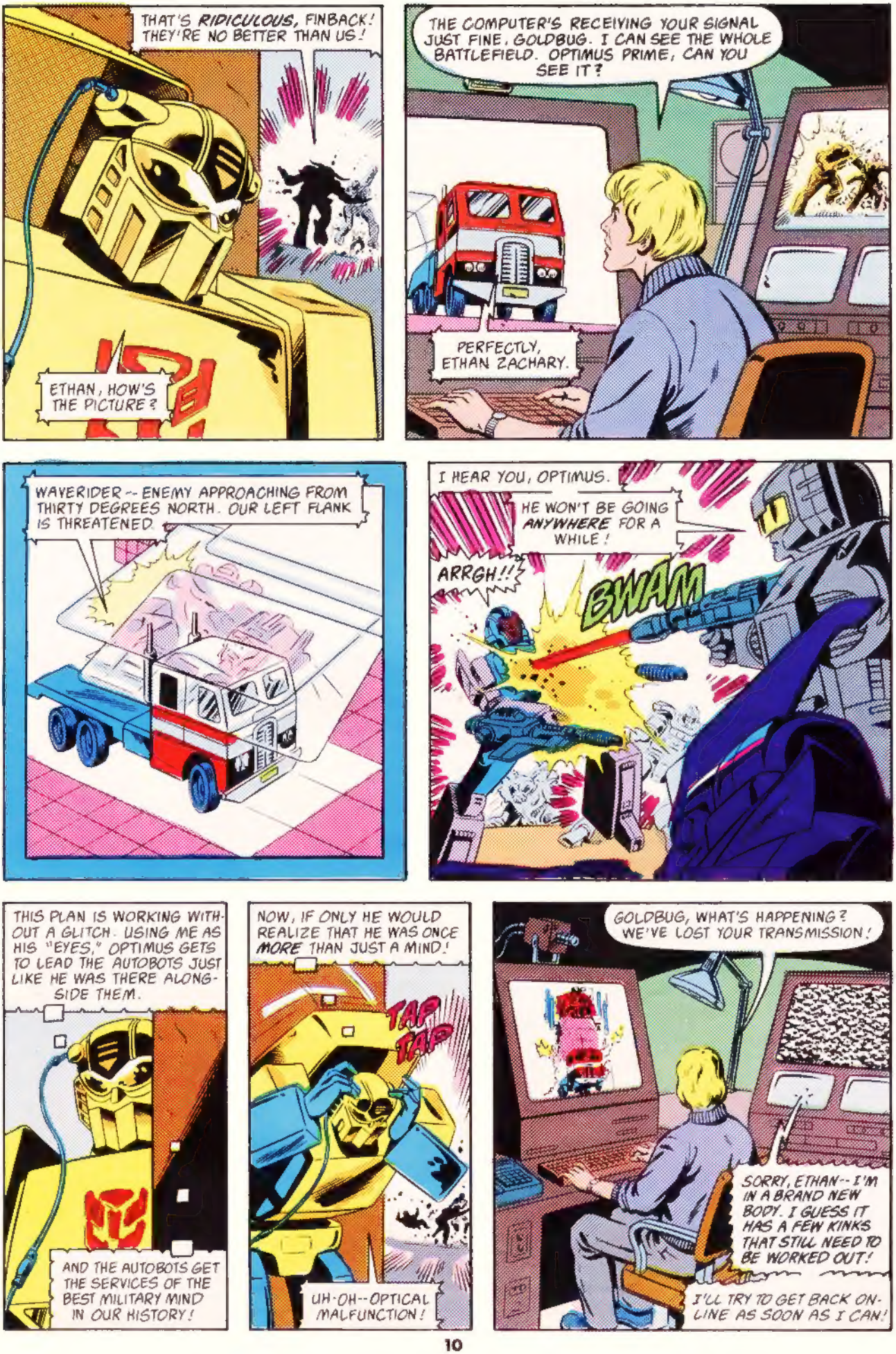

THIS IS OPTIMUS PRIME, AUTOBOT PRETENDERS. PRETEND NO MORE -- YOUR ATTACKERS ARE SURELY CONVINCED OF YOUR COWARDICE BY NOW!
REVEAL AND ROLL OUT!
YOU HEARD HIM BOTS! LET'S SHOW THESE CREATURES WHO WE REALLY ARE--

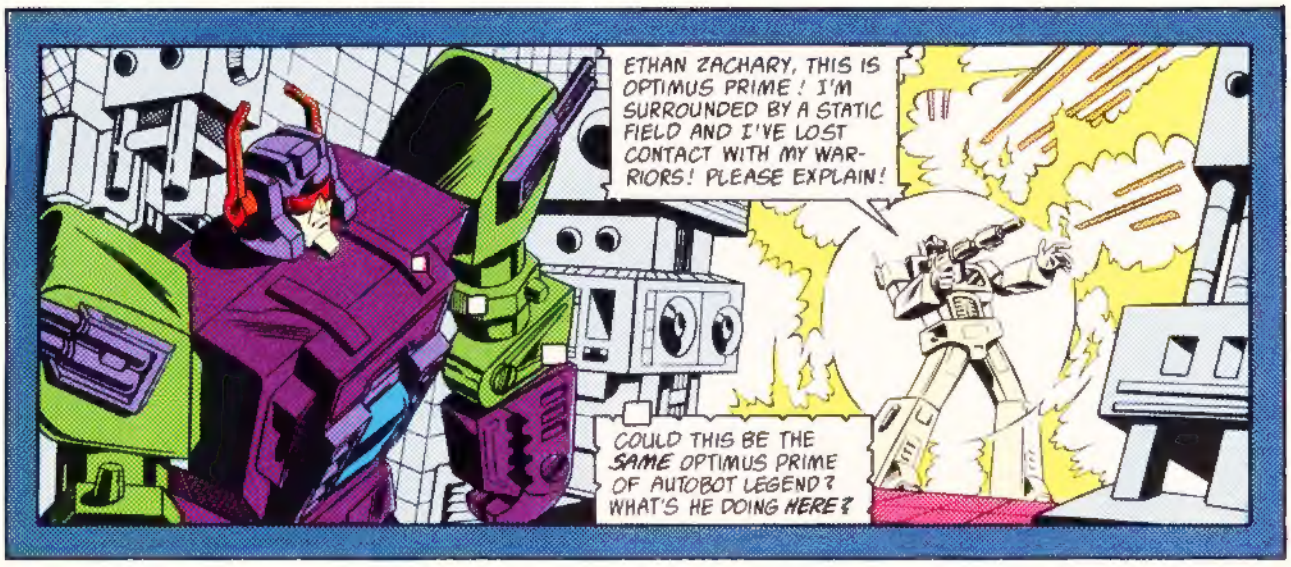

--AUTOBOTS?! INSIDE THOSE FLESHLING FORMS?!

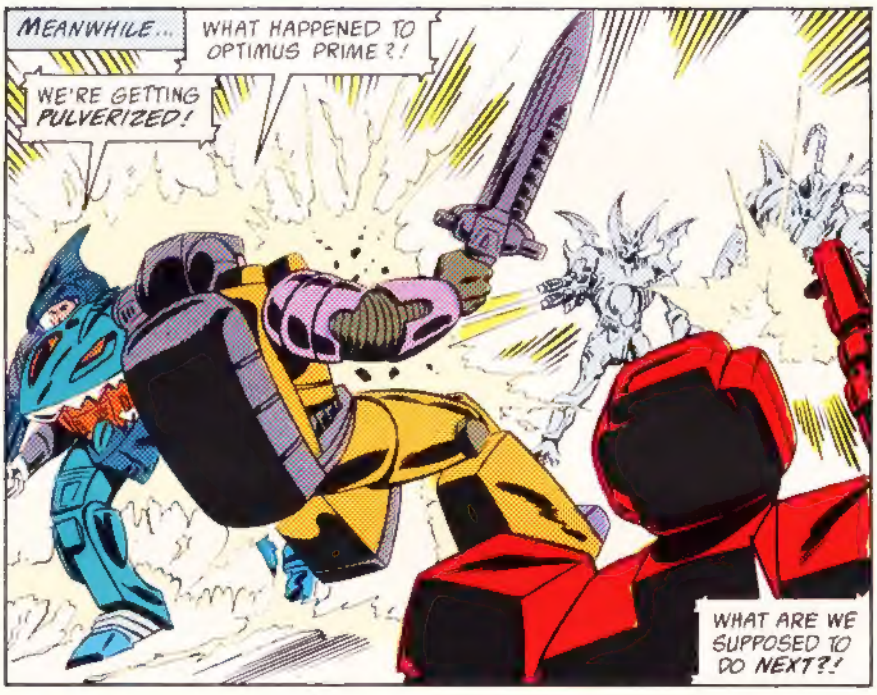

THAT'S SUPPOSED TO BE OUR TRICK, IGUANUS! WE'RE OUT-NUMBERED TWO TO ONE!


COMMANDER SCORPONOK SAID WE WOULD SURPRISE THEM!
NOW ISN'T THE TIME TO BE RECALLING THE WORDS OF THAT MICROBRAINED MORON, SUBMARAUDER!
IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO EVEN THE ODDS, IGUANUS!
DECEPTICON PRETENDERS DIVIDE...
..AND CONQUER!
THE AUTOBOTS WERE READY FOR THAT!
IT'S AS THOUGH THEY'RE READY FOR OUR EVERY MOVE!
BLOW
SPROW

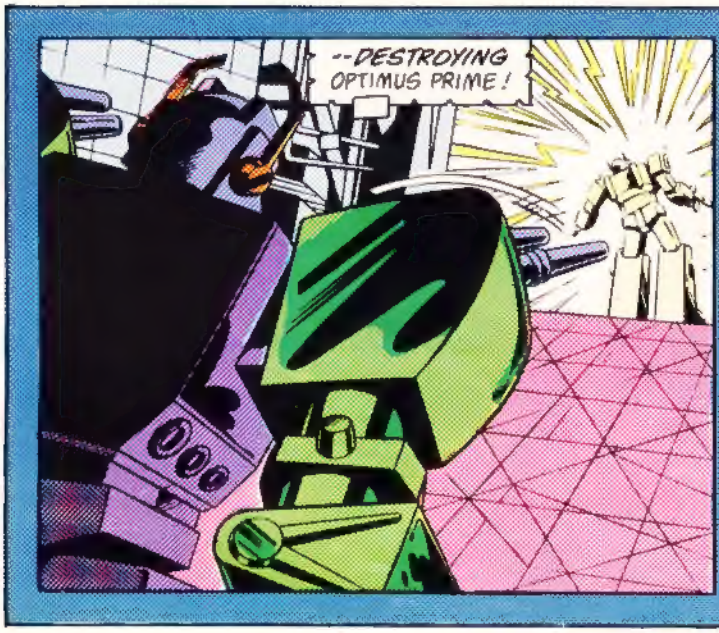
CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

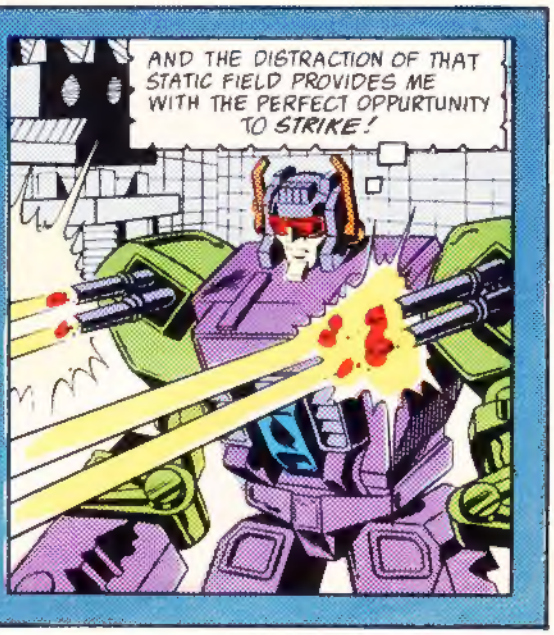

THAT'S RIDICULOUS, FINBACK! THEY'RE NO BETTER THAN US!
ETHAN, HOW'S THE PICTURE?
THE COMPUTER'S RECEIVING YOUR SIGNAL JUST FINE, GOLDBUG. I CAN SEE THE WHOLE BATTLEFIELD. OPTIMUS PRIME, CAN YOU SEE IT?
PERFECTLY, ETHAN ZACHARY.
WAVERIDER -- ENEMY APPROACHING FROM THIRTY DEGREES NORTH. OUR LEFT FLANK IS THREATENED.
I HEAR YOU, OPTIMUS.
HE WON'T BE GOING ANYWHERE FOR A WHILE!
ARRGH!!!
BWAM
THIS PLAN IS WORKING WITHOUT A GLITCH. USING ME AS HIS "EYES," OPTIMUS GETS TO LEAD THE AUTOBOTS JUST LIKE HE WAS THERE ALONGSIDE THEM.
AND THE AUTOBOTS GET THE SERVICES OF THE BEST MILITARY MIND IN OUR HISTORY!
NOW, IF ONLY HE WOULD REALIZE THAT HE WAS ONCE MORE THAN JUST A MIND!
TAP TAP
UH-OH -- OPTICAL MALFUNCTION!
GOLDBUG, WHAT'S HAPPENING? WE'VE LOST YOUR TRANSMISSION!
SORRY, ETHAN -- I'M IN A BRAND NEW BODY. I GUESS IT HAS A FEW KINKS THAT STILL NEED TO BE WORKED OUT!
I'LL TRY TO GET BACK ONLINE AS SOON AS I CAN!

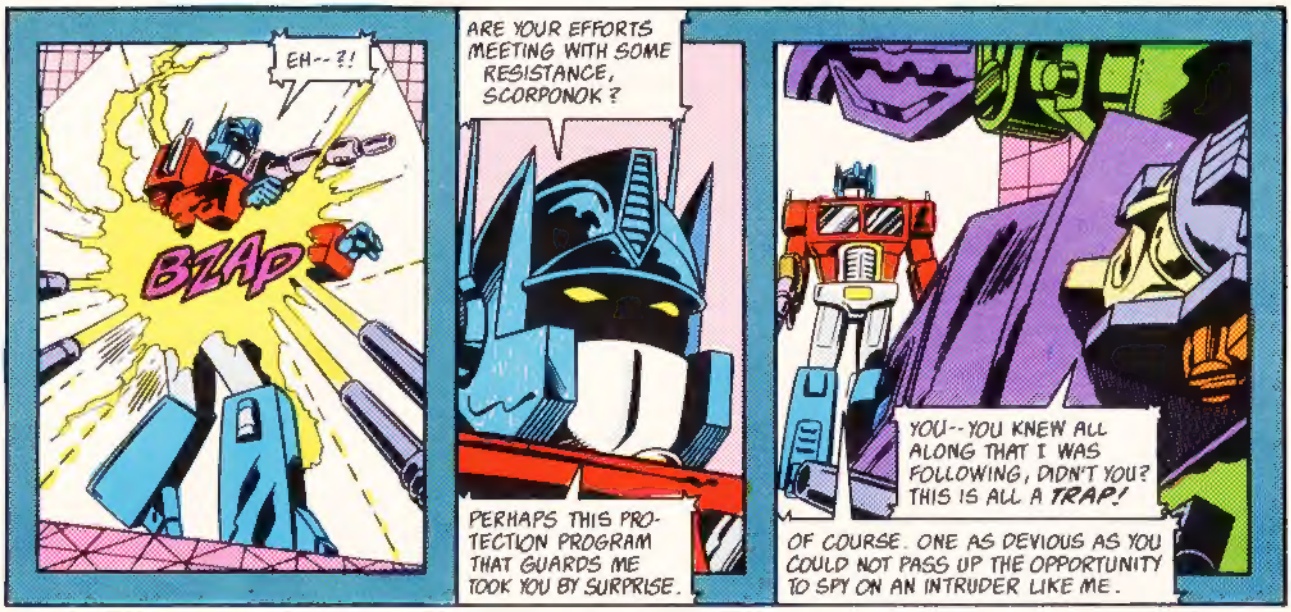

ETHAN ZACHARY, THIS IS OPTIMUS PRIME ! I'M SURROUNDED BY A STATIC FIELD AND I'VE LOST CONTACT WITH MY WARRIORS! PLEASE EXPLAIN!
COULD THIS BE THE *SAME* OPTIMUS PRIME OF AUTOBOT LEGEND? WHAT'S HE DOING *HERE*?

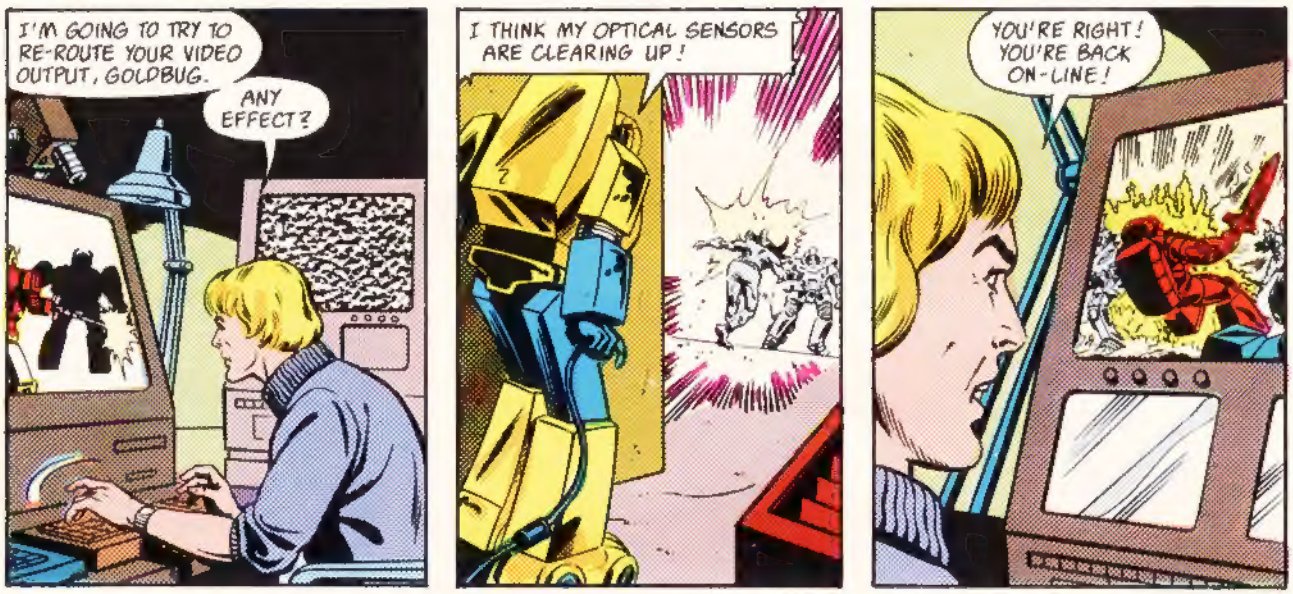

MEANWHILE...
WHAT HAPPENED TO OPTIMUS PRIME?!
WE'RE GETTING *PULVERIZED!*
WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO *NEXT*?!

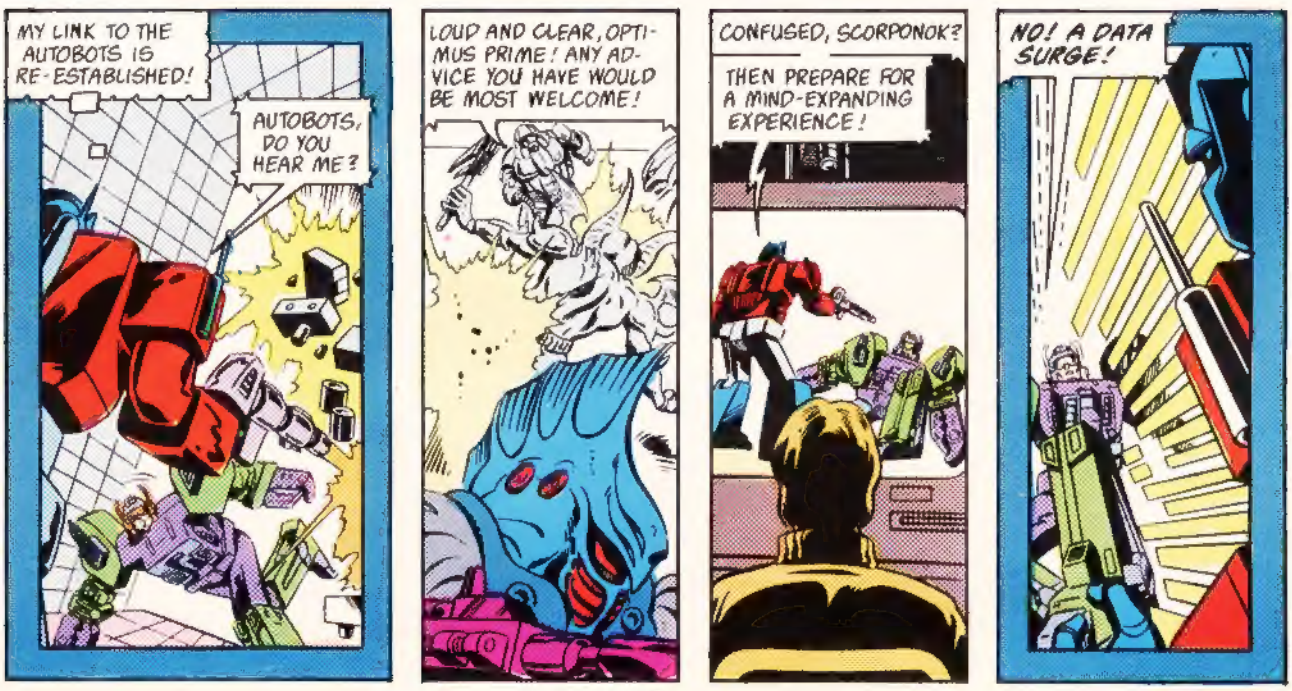
SCORPONOK, THIS IS BOMBBURST! THE AUTOBOTS ARE IN COMPLETE DISARRAY! WE'LL BE FINISHED WITH THEM IN NO TIME!
SPLENDID! ONLY ONE TASK REMAINS--

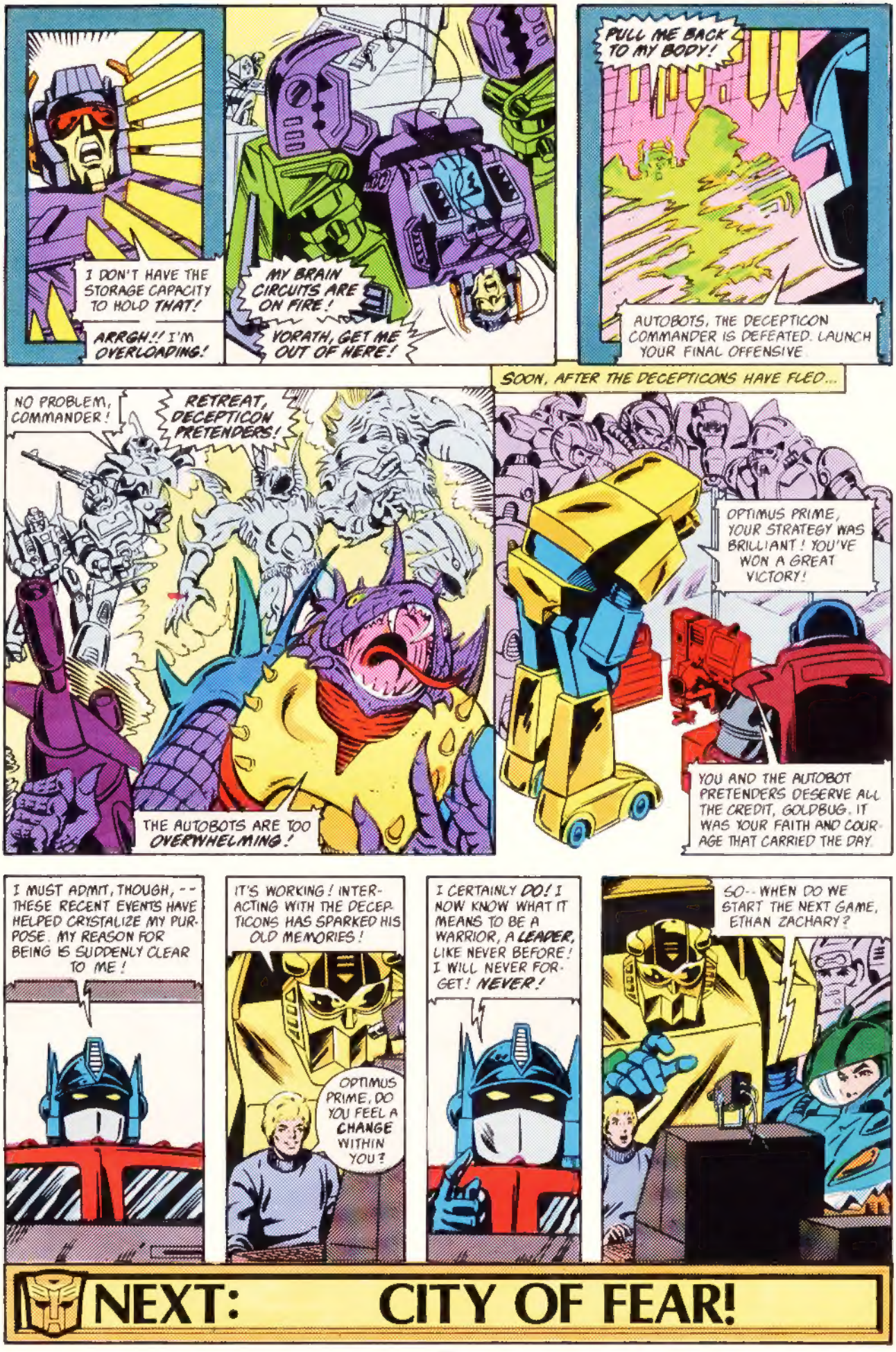

--*DESTROYING* OPTIMUS PRIME!


AND THE DISTRACTION OF THAT STATIC FIELD PROVIDES ME WITH THE PERFECT OPPURTUNITY TO *STRIKE!*


EH--?!
BZAP
ARE YOUR EFFORTS MEETING WITH SOME RESISTANCE, SCORPONOK?
PERHAPS THIS PROTECTION PROGRAM THAT GUARDS ME TOOK YOU BY SURPRISE.
YOU--YOU KNEW ALL ALONG THAT I WAS FOLLOWING, DIDN'T YOU? THIS IS ALL A TRAP!
OF COURSE. ONE AS DEVIOUS AS YOU COULD NOT PASS UP THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPY ON AN INTRUDER LIKE ME.


I'M GOING TO TRY TO RE-ROUTE YOUR VIDEO OUTPUT, GOLDBUG.
ANY EFFECT?
I THINK MY OPTICAL SENSORS ARE CLEARING UP!
YOU'RE RIGHT! YOU'RE BACK ON-LINE!


MY LINK TO THE AUTOBOTS IS RE-ESTABLISHED!
AUTOBOTS, DO YOU HEAR ME?
LOUD AND CLEAR, OPTIMUS PRIME! ANY ADVICE YOU HAVE WOULD BE MOST WELCOME!
CONFUSED, SCORPONOK?
THEN PREPARE FOR A MIND-EXPANDING EXPERIENCE!
NO! A DATA SURGE!


I DON'T HAVE THE STORAGE CAPACITY TO HOLD THAT!
ARRGH!! I'M OVERLOADING!
MY BRAIN CIRCUITS ARE ON FIRE!
YORATH, GET ME OUT OF HERE!
PULL ME BACK TO MY BODY!
AUTOBOTS, THE DECEPTICON COMMANDER IS DEFEATED. LAUNCH YOUR FINAL OFFENSIVE
SOON, AFTER THE DECEPTICONS HAVE FLED...
NO PROBLEM, COMMANDER!
RETREAT, DECEPTICON PRETENDERS!
THE AUTOBOTS ARE TOO OVERWHELMING!
OPTIMUS PRIME, YOUR STRATEGY WAS BRILLIANT! YOU'VE WON A GREAT VICTORY!
YOU AND THE AUTOBOT PRETENDERS DESERVE ALL THE CREDIT, GOLDBUG. IT WAS YOUR FAITH AND COURAGE THAT CARRIED THE DAY.
I MUST ADMIT, THOUGH, -- THESE RECENT EVENTS HAVE HELPED CRYSTALIZE MY PURPOSE. MY REASON FOR BEING IS SUDDENLY CLEAR TO ME!
IT'S WORKING! INTERACTING WITH THE DECEPTICONS HAS SPARKED HIS OLD MEMORIES!
OPTIMUS PRIME, DO YOU FEEL A CHANGE WITHIN YOU?
I CERTAINLY DO! I NOW KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A WARRIOR, A LEADER, LIKE NEVER BEFORE! I WILL NEVER FORGET! NEVER!
SO-- WHEN DO WE START THE NEXT GAME, ETHAN ZACHARY?
NEXT: CITY OF FEAR!